

SUPER-7

JAPANESE TOY CULTURE

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SUPERSOL / GATCHAMAN PART 2
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TIM BISKUP
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KATHY STAICO-SCHORR
TODD SCHORR

GARY BASEMAN
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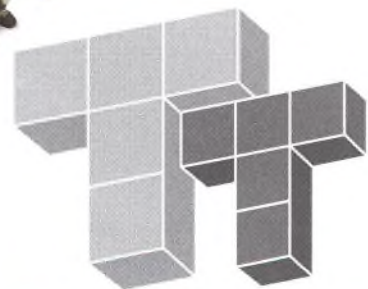
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Founders & Editors

Mark Nagata / Brian Flynn

Design

Brian Flynn / Geoff Allen
Hybrid Design, Inc. / www.hybrid-design.com

Contributing Editor / Ad Sales

Chad Hensley / chad@super7magazine.com

Retail Director

Mark Miyake / miyake@super7store.com

Gracious Contributors

Bwana Spoons, Tim Brisko, Patrick at I.W.G., David Horvath, Sun-Min Kim, Koji Harmon, Dalek, Paul & Ana at Kid Robot, Jason Eaton, Masataka Shinobe, Jeff Dey, Kow Yokoyama, Ed Sanford, Alex Cohn, Warren Schwartz, Richard Cox, Mike Johnson, Tom Franck, Eric Joyner, Brad is Drab, Lindsey Kuhn, Marusan Toy - Kaminaga-san, Pablo Montemurro, Mark Miyake, CCP crew - Toyo and Endo, Bill Gallagher.

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Editorial / Submissions

mark@super7magazine.com

Contact / Goodie Boxes

Super7 Magazine / P.O. Box 330235, San Francisco, Ca. 94133
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Illustration by Mark Nagata

Memories


It looks like toys are making a come back. I am noticing more active bidding and higher final bids. Do you suppose we've finally hit rock bottom and now toys are climbing back up in value and interest? I think several factors that contribute to this resurgence include the popularity of Anime/Asian Pop Culture, designer vinyls, and the kids. Not us, the big kids, but real kids like my son. He's growing up exposed to toys from Japan that I buy him. His childhood memories of these toys are the keys to the future of toy collecting. The big difference I see between us old timers and the future collector is that the value of these newer toys will never be worth as much pre 1970s toys. Consider some of these factors: Moms don't throw away toys like they use to. Companies make toys in the hundreds of thousands versus mere thousands in years past. Add that to the higher media profile of toy collecting and you begin to see how much information is now available. The aspect of toy collecting that will never change is that kids will grow up to collect and they will seek out the toys from their memories and join us in the endless pursuit of completing our collections.

This issue marks the third year of publishing Super7 Magazine. When Brian and I started this venture, I never thought it would keep going. Let alone spawn a retail store and toy company. We rely on our core group of readers and contributors to keep Super7 thriving, so I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you (yes, you!) for supporting Super7. We value our reader's input and opinions about the magazine and would like to invite you to take part in our 2005 Online Reader Survey to help us provide exciting content and toy offers for you the reader. The survey is anonymous and we will not sell the information. Please go to www.super7store.com/survey.php. And, for our readers, use the code S7issue8 to receive 10% off your next web store order from www.super7store.com. Offer good until April 1st, 2005.

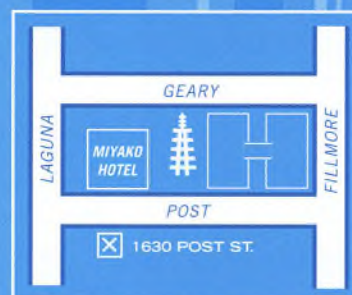
Super7 wants to thank Lemi Hiyashi for translating the "Garbage Digger" article from the last issue. We apologize for the oversight.

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GODZILLA 50TH ANNIVERSARY ART SHOW

Last issue you saw the art pieces, now you get to see the party! Held in conjunction with Halloween (the day before) so the celebrity and monster sightings were beyond belief. Jacko, Andy Warhol, Elliott from E.T. and host of others posed for pictures. Someone even dressed up as Mike Sutfin! Art mastermind Alex Mooney stopped by and did Godzilla impersonations while battling Max Nagata's Ultraman fighting techniques. All in all, it was a crazy night, and a great time was had by ghouls, gals and Godzilla alike. Be sure to stop by next time, we were expecting you!



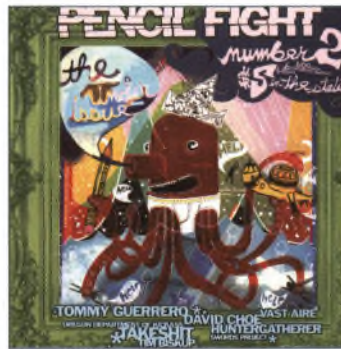
PETTY BOOKA PERFORMANCE

Every time I think of Hawaiian ukelele cover bands, Japan's Petty Booka comes to mind. Okay, I'll be honest, I had not heard Ramones covers on ukelele before and it was pretty great. Their in-store was amazing and packed full of eager fans. Now it's your turn to check it out: www.pettybooka.com



PENCIL FIGHT ISSUE 2 RELEASE PARTY

Pencil biters beware! Pencil Fight #2 has hit the streets and is looking for action! Produced by Super7's own mayhem of Micronauts, Bwana Spoons. This second issue features articles on Tim Biskup, Takeshi & Cocobat, Tommy Guerrero (ex-pro skateboarder and full-time musician), David Choe, Hunter-Gatherer, and tons more stuff you just wish you knew. You can get PF#2 at the Super7 Store or from Bwana directly at rainbowmaster@earthlink.net



SUPER7 UPCOMING EVENTS

FRAGMENTS / Art of Ronnie del Carmen & Enrico Casarosa
March 5 - April 4, 2005 at Super7 Store

PROCESS RECESS / Art of James Jean / April 8 - May 11 at Super7 Store

ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO / San Francisco / April 9-10, 2005

SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON July 14-17, 2005

SUPER7 TOY EXCLUSIVES



MOLLY BY ROCKETWORLD / I.W.G.

Waiting to give you a helping hand for any occasion, the Super7 special edition Molly has arrived. It is cast in glow-in-the-dark vinyl with white eyes and carries hammers and wrenches... just waiting to wreck your party. With a total of 16 arms, you can't handle the crazy chaos that is Molly. Only 100 pieces made. The I.W.G. is not going to take your puny human meddling anymore, so appease them now by giving them a good home!

Payment of \$45.00 + \$8.00 shipping



CCP BURNING HEDORAH VINYL

In case you have not already heard about the CCP Hedorah vinyl, it was easily one of the coolest figures to come out in years. A massive toy, this figure will smash your Godzilla vinyls to pieces! This Super7 exclusive "Burning" version is limited to 100 pieces and will sell out before you can say "smog monster." So get up and get one before it is too late!



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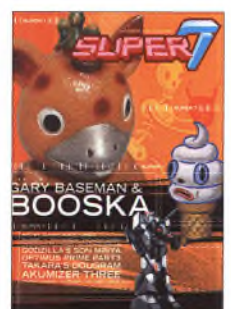
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Just when you thought the toy world couldn't get more ugly, along comes our good friend David Horvath to prove us all right. This limited edition giclee print measures 20" x 30" and features all of your favorite friends making a scene in the big city. Tell your friends! Tell your enemies! Get a limited edition Horvath print for yourself today! Only 75 prints were made, and it is strictly first come, first served!

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Girmos rises from the sea! Super7, in association with Shono-Kikaku/Dream Rocket, present this awesome original kaiju from Japan. Standing 9.75 inches tall, Girmos features an exclusive Super7 paint scheme and foot stamp. This all vinyl figure comes bagged with header card and is limited to the amount ordered. The first 20 figures ordered come with a bonus limited edition Giclee painting of Girmos by artist, Mark Nagata.

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Baikin Gundan Exhibition

These days, most people think of gachapon toys as well-painted and finely-detailed miniatures of their favorite characters. But before all this, before these colorful mass produced 200 yen figures became all the rage, gachapon figures were smaller, simpler, cheaper, and mostly made of rubber. Called "keshigomu", or erasers, these toys were rarely, if ever painted, and usually with just a simple one color swipe of an airbrush. They were sold at small candy shops or supermarkets in 30 yen gachapon machines. Most were tiny (less than an inch tall), made of brightly colored rubber, and had no parts; quite simple. What made these toys appealing was their price and variety.

Konno Sangyo Co., Ltd. has been in the gachapon business for quite some time. Their original characters, the Baikin Gundan (Germ Gang), were a hit with young boys in the '80s and '90s. Konno Sangyo's Baikin characters were dirty and disgusting, they were everything boys loved: snot and farts, scary faces with sharp teeth, multiple eyes and limbs, etc. Some of the Baikin characters ate humans, some were shaped like piles of crap, and some even rode around in tanks, on roller skates, or on motorcycles! What more could you ask for?

November 20th and 21st, 2004, in Harajuku. To coincide with the release of a new batch of Baikin figures, Konno Sangyo, Greifen, and Gargamel put together an event showcasing everything Baikin. On display were elaborate collections of vintage Baikin prototypes, test shots, erasers, gachapon machine display card designs, and original Baikin-inspired artwork by a host of artists from Japan and the US including: Chanmen, Yukinori Dehara, Katope, Koji Harmon, Hiroyuki Hirose, Nanpei Kaneko, Mark Nagata, and Bwana Spoons. Sold exclusively at the event were specially airbrushed Konno Sangyo Baikin Gundan gachapon erasers, Greifen Baikin Gundan soft vinyl figures (sculpted by Gargamel), and Gargamel Baikin Expo t-shirts.



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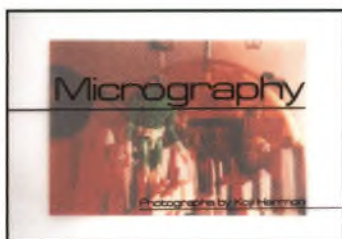
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MICRONAUT BOOK by Koji Harmon

Micrography by Koji Harmon is a new 14 page, full color spiral bound book featuring Microman and Micronauts toys in various action scenes. Old toy catalogs, childhood, and friends inspired the photos. It was released in 2000 as a personal project, mainly intended for fellow Micro geeks. Micrography has since been reprinted several times and distributed at various toy events in Japan. All photos were shot on 35mm film and the 6 x 8.5 inch books are assembled by hand. Micrography 2 is now in the works, and will feature more Micro action shots, as well as Henshin and Shonen Cyborg.

Available directly from Koji Harmon for \$15 postage paid and the Super7 store. Super7 recommends this addition to your book collection.

Contact Koji at: microdebris@aol.com

**GARGAMEL CLEAR MICROMAN**

At first sight, Clear Microman looks as if he could have been made in the '70s. With only 3 points of articulation (arms and waist), the figure has limited pose ability, playability, and no interchangeability with the original line. Inspired by early Takara Microman and vintage vinyl figures, Clear Microman was designed with nostalgia and simplicity in mind. This figure stands just less than 5 inches, and features the Microman logo on his back (reminiscent of the soft vinyl version of Robotman). Sculpted by Kiyoka Ikeda of Gargamel, and limited to only 80 pieces, Clear Microman was released at Wonder Festival Summer 2004. Gargamel was granted a one time license from Takara to produce the figures exclusively for the event. For those who haven't gotten your hands on one of these, keep your eyes open for other Gargamel Microman soft vinyl figures to be released in the near future.

**BANDAI D.I.C.E.**

Bandai America has released a full toy line called D.I.C.E. based on a Cartoon Network show. D.I.C.E (DNA Integrated Cybernetic Enterprises) is a large corporation established to deal with emergencies occurring throughout the Sarbylion galaxy. With futuristic armor called ildsuits, high-tech, transforming vehicles and a mysterious Phantom Knight, the D.I.C.E. F-99 is the only unit comprised entirely of highly trained kids. When a problem arises, D.I.C.E is called to the rescue. And when their special training and skills aren't enough, they rely on their Dinobreakers to help get the job done. Always on call, always on alert D.I.C.E is ready for action, now available at all major toy outlets!



MY FRIEND THE MICRONAUT

BY BWANA SPOONS



mfilm

Survivors, and The Eye Of The Tiger

Surviving childhood is pretty damn tough. Surviving me if you were one of my toys was even tougher. We have all heard the stories of mom and dad selling off a monstrous collection of Ampzillas at the annual church rummage sale for quarters without a thought. It is always painful to hear those stories of woe. For my buddies, their ultimate enemy was me. In the early years, my play was gentle: rebuilding my Battle Cruiser into endless variations, all shiny new and white or holding my Pharoid up to my starfish nightlight to see how many minutes of glow I could get before off to dreamland. Then puberty struck, and the fight between junior high (and girls) versus losing myself in imaginative play with my toys began. I could no longer visualize the worlds in my head, so jus' flying the millennium falcon with my hand wasn't good enough anymore. My friends and I tied a rope to it, and jus' started swinging. Then the same with my He-man buddies out in the

walnut orchard ending with a Man-At-Arms/Skeletor log ride into the horizon as we bombed them with rocks and dirt clods. Then came the infamous Lego Lance Mountain Tahoe ramp burning in my garage. Sheets of black Lego plastic floated through the smoke filled air. The final blow was spent on a summer day building sand castles with my friends and my Star Wars and Micronauts figures. Innocent fun ended with stabbing my parents' steak knives into the sand to collect the buried treasure: Sssssk, ssssssk, stuk. "I got a Chewy!" The wounded and buried left behind for future archeologists.

Pictured here are a few survivors of my childhood, which I now cherish more than ever.

Do you have any survivors?

i.NSURGENTS W.iLDERNESS G.RUPPO



The I.nsurgents W.ilderness G.ruppo is a group of sentient animals who have been mutated by mysterious extraterrestrials into an organized fighting force ready to battle their human oppressors. The toy concept has been described as a designer vinyl where Che Guevara meets Animal Farm. Each character possesses a special weapon to be used against their human enemies- poachers, corporate polluters, and black market animal profiteers. The first series of the I.W.G. includes 9 members: Titus the Grizzly Bear, Hannibal the Mountain Guerilla, Affonso the White Rhino, Odysseus the Sea Otter, Ocho the Woodland Beast, Moly the Cephalopod, Irra the Burrowing Owl, Desmond the Dolphin, and Astrid the Jaguar.

The I.W.G. concept was first born on a plane ride to London on Christmas day of 2000. The toys debuted to the public at the New York City Toy Fair in February of 2004. In addition to a fascination with archeology, an underlying mantra of Ma's website www.rocketworld.org is that the creation of objects is intrinsic and fundamental to homo-sapiens. "Objects in all their many forms and intentions become the future artifacts of tomorrow," says Ma. "Objects-cum-artifacts are the cultural-techno sign posts of who we are and the I.W.G. toys provide the commentary within that context."

Ma's aesthetic canon was inspired by watching science fiction films on Saturday afternoon such as *Forbidden Planet*, the *Godzilla* series, *War of the Worlds*, and TV reruns of the original *Star Trek*, *Speed Racer*, and the Rankin/Bass produced holiday specials. The creation of the I.W.G. toys was a direct result of Ma's interest in these themes and a genuine concern for wildlife. Over the past year and a half, Ma has spent numerous weeks in the rainforests, mountain ranges, and jungles, to the

high plateaus of Central and South America, working with friends and associates from various wildlife conservation groups. The rebellious characters from the I.W.G. are his slightly dark and obtuse commentary on human kind's destruction of Earth's zoological heritage.

Each figure in the current I.W.G. toy series comes in a full-color, window box and is limited to a serialized edition of 500 pieces. Each figure has several points of articulation and an accessory weapon. For example-Titus the Grizzly Bear uses a sniper rifle, Hannibal the Mountain Guerilla uses fragmentation grenades, and Affonso the White Rhino uses an assault rifle. During the 2004 San Diego Comic-Con, both Hollywood Director John Landis and pop star Ashley Simpson purchased I.W.G. figures.

A portion of Ma's toy sales are donated to select non-profit wildlife conservation groups such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Gorilla Foundation, and the Zoo Conservation Outreach Group. The toys are currently available at boutique and specialty toy retailers. In partnership with RocketWorld, this issue of *Super7* offers an exclusive 100 piece edition of Moly the 16-legged Cephalopod in glow-in-the-dark vinyl.





DALEK VS. KID ROBOT

BY BRIAN FLYNN

AN INTERVIEW WITH DALEK

Dalek is one of the artists to emerge from the burgeoning Brooklyn art scene. Taking inspiration from street, graffiti culture and television, his work straddles the divide between the street and high art. Dalek started painting graffiti in 1994, and his work included a consistently strange yet appealing character that would become his trademark, "Space Monkey." His career has covered drawings, illustrations, paintings, graffiti, photographs and now toys.





DALEK ICEBOTS

Your first toy set was made by Sony Creative, what made you decide to collaborate with Kid Robot for your next series of toys?

Kid Robot actually contacted me about doing something together through a mutual friend. This was when they were in the process of moving to New York. I had heard of them and knew they had a good reputation, so it seemed to roll along naturally.

You did the Dunny art show first, and then a series of 15 of your own Dunny characters. Now you have done a series of ice-bots. Aside from the shape, is there any difference to the way you approached each set?

I actually didn't participate in the Dunny art show. I didn't have the time to get it done, so I sat out. As far as making designs for Dunny, Qees, or what have you - I approach it all pretty much the same. It's just fun to sit in front of the template and create random characters. I love it. It's a nice break from the (Space) monkey. It allows me the time to develop new characters. The Icebots developed out of that process and since then I have been working up all sorts of new character and story ideas.

What do you think of doing format characters vs. completely unique characters? Is there a difference?

Obviously creating new characters from scratch is a whole different ball game. It's cool to create the whole thing and it takes on much more of a personal style than working on a pre-existing shape. Like I said though, it's great sometimes to work on those pre-existing shapes because it allows you to just focus on the design elements of creating the face, the clothing, whatever. I can sit down in a day and create 20 or 30 paint jobs for an existing shape, whereas creating a whole new character can take a lot longer to draw up and mess around with. Of course once it's done, like the ice-bots, then it is the same game - dropping in paint jobs. Just depends on the day I guess.

Tell us a little about the 8" Space Monkey. I was surprised that it took this long for you to make one. How long have you been waiting to make a large space monkey?

I have wanted to do one for a while. Although the Space Monkey in 3-D is a little odd to me, everything in the 2-D versions is about balance and symmetry. It was hard to do the 3-D version with big eyes and a little cyber eye. So the Kid Robot version and the Cereal Art version both have 2 big eyes. I don't know about making anymore Space Monkey toys for awhile, I'd rather develop other stuff. That is what is appealing to me about making toys right now - a chance to expand and explore. So, in answer to your question, I was excited. Now I am over it... Space Monkey toys that is.

Do you see the toys you have made as having a direct link to the work you create, or do they take on a different personality when rendered in 3-D?

The Cereal Art monkey is pretty true to the monkeys in the paintings. Although, like I said, they had to be balanced out for the 3-D style. The personality is pretty true to what they are like in the 2-D work.

What is your dream toy project?

I don't know if I can fully conceive that yet. I mean I am hoping to venture into the world of toy making. I have really enjoyed my experiences so far and I can see myself doing this long term. It's really fun. I have the joy for this like I do for the painting. Ideally, I would love to have my own toy line to create worlds of characters...

What other toys do you collect? Are there any other toy designers who you are a big fan of?

I am trying to stop toy collecting actually, it's too much. I can't hang and my apartment is overrun, so I am really only picking up things that I think are 100% sweet. As far as designers, I love KAWS stuff - he's on point. And I like the Bigfoot toy that Upper Playground did - that's hot. Tim Biskup and Gary Baseman's stuff is nice. I have all the Simpsons toys. Those are some of my favorites.

Nickel Plated Angels was pretty enthusiastically received, and the sequel book is coming out soon. What else do you have in the works?

As far as product endeavors, a few things: I prefer not to talk about them - don't want to jinx anything; nothing worse than talking about something and having it not come to fruition. Hope you don't mind.

Opposite page -

Large: Green 8" Space Monkey, Pink 8" Space Monkey - both limited to 444 pieces

Small: Dalek series of Dunnies

This page -

Above: Dalek series of Icebots - 5 of 15 shown.

Below: Views of pink and green 8" Space Monkeys



SUPERSOL

ULTRAMAN KAIJU IN ARGENTINA



Travel Guide: Brian Flynn



TOKYO
JPN

BUENOS
AIRES
ARG

TRAVEL VISA YEAR:
1969

Argentina is not the first place most people think of when they think of Ultraman. Location and language aside, it seemed an odd place for the red and silver hero to land — much less thrive. In 1969 (and possibly before then), an Argentinean company named Supersol licensed the rights to broadcast Ultraman from United Artists. At that same time Supersol also produced several Ultraman toys based on the show. While none of the toys actually bear a copyright of any sort, (much like the early Marusan toys that they were derived from), they do appear to be genuine licensed goods as part of the overall broadcast license obtained by Supersol.

What little we have learned about Supersol's history is mostly hearsay and rumor. Supposedly, the company had a large warehouse fire at one point, destroying much of their inventory and putting the company out of business. What Supersol stock that did remain was later found in other warehouses and/or from distributors, and later sold at auction. Two separate toy dealers in Argentina each bought roughly 5-6 pieces each of Peguira, Kanegon and the Ultraman Science Patrol plane. These toys sat in both dealers inventory for several years, until eBay's Argentinean site became included in global eBay internet searches in late 2004.

It appears that the majority of toys that Supersol produced were based directly from existing Marusan toys. The most obvious of which being the Ultra Kaiju figures. While only an orange Kanegon and light-blue Peguira have surfaced to this point, a Supersol ad from 1969 shows a bright red Chandler, (incorrectly labelled as "Gehora"), and rumors have persisted for some time of a white Rodan figure that came from South America. Whether either of these toys were actually produced has yet to be proven, but the possibility most definitely exists, as well as of other yet to be discovered kaiju.

At first glance, the kaiju appear to be genuine Marusan issue kaiju, but there are significant variations that exist upon closer inspection. The most obvious difference is color. The Kanegon is a bright orange with yellow, red and black sprays, as well as silver and white hand

continued



Opposite page: Supersol Orange Kanegon figure.

This page -top to bottom: Supersol Ultraman coin bank front and back, Ultraman Science Patrol plane with yellow hull, Ultraman Science Patrol plane with blue hull, Ultraman Science Patrol plane wing detail.

Below: Supersol ad featuring Ultraman products from 1969.



SUPERSOL

TE DESEA UN FELIZ AÑO LECTIVO

LICENCIADO EXCLUSIVO DE UNITED ARTISTS CORP. PARA LA FABRICACIÓN DE JUGUETES DE LA LÍNEA...

ULTRAMÁN

SOLICITELOS EN LAS MEJORES JUGUETERIAS DE SU ZONA

WATCH THIS CHANNEL FOR
ULTRA man
PROTECTOR OF THE WORLD

Planta trasmisora de ULTRAMAN terrestre.

GEHORA, enemigo de la Tierra

Alcancia ULTRAMAN

Pistola atómica

Nave espacial de ULTRAMAN

SUPERSOL: GREGORIA PEREZ 3218 - BUENOS AIRES T. E. 76-2146 - 76-2192
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SUPERSOL

ULTRAMAN KAIJU IN ARGENTINA



Supersol continued...

painted details on the head. In both cases, the detail on the hand painted sections of the face is stunning, and far more detailed than any of the original Marusan figures. This is most evident on the Peguira, with thin lines highlighting the edge of the mouth on the top and bottom, as well as individually painted teeth and eyes.

Upon handling the figures, the other main difference becomes obvious —these are not vinyl figures. Instead, the bodies have been made with blow-molded plastic, complete with seam lines from two-piece molds, and the heads are made of a soft, pale orange colored rubber that was then painted to match the body color. While it is impossible to tell if the figures were simply cast off of original Marusan vinyls and remolded, the clarity of detail within the figures makes it seem as if Supersol had some access to sculpts or molds from Marusan —but that is pure conjecture at this point.

Both kaiju figures were sold bagged with an illustrated header card, just as their Marusan counterparts. The Supersol header card features a small Ultraman fighting a giant, snaking green monster whose open mouth has been die-cut to become the hanger of the card. On the back side of the card, there is an illustration of a young boy watching Ultraman on television, while another boy reads Billiken magazine with Ultraman on the cover on the right hand side. In the center is a diamond shaped Supersol logo, whose top point actually makes the shape of the bottom tooth in the green monster's mouth on the reverse side. In an early cross-promotional move, Supersol manages to plug its television show and magazine at the same time you are looking at the toy of the same show.

Supersol also produced an Ultraman coin bank, which features the original Marusan Ultraman figure molded against a brick wall. The back of the toy has a small slit at the top for coins to be dropped into, but there is no hole for the coins to ever be removed. Once again, the toy is made of blow molded plastic, instead of vinyl, and is cast in silver plastic with red and yellow spray details. If there was a traditional figure made of the main hero, it has yet to show up in either ads or an actual sample.

The Science Patrol plane that was made was a large blow molded plastic toy made of several distinct pieces. Supposedly made in several different color combinations, the two pictured here have red, yellow and blue component parts, which vary from toy to toy. As an added detail, the toy has raised details on the front and rear wings of the Ultraman logo and name. What is interesting, is in the blue hull version of the plane, the windows of the plane have been painted in, and the raised rear wing details have been painted in silver, yet on the yellow hull version of the plane, there is no additional paint application on the windows or wings. Additionally, the 1969 Supersol ad also features art for an Ultraman automatic pistol and transmission pin, but neither toy has yet to surface.

While it is pure conjecture, it is fairly safe to assume that Supersol was related to "Billiken" magazine. Featured on the back header card of the kaiju figures, Billiken magazine was a manga style children's magazine featuring serialized comics of several different cartoon characters, including Ultraman, in conjunction with word-finds, cross-words and other simple puzzles. The Supersol ad seen in this article is from the inside front cover of issue 2564 from March 3rd, 1969 issue. Some issues also came with premiums as well, and the 15cm yellow Ultraman figure shown here may have been one. Surprisingly, Billiken is an older Argentinean company, founded in 1919, and has no connection to the Japanese company of the same name.

While this is a fairly comprehensive overview of what we know of Supersol to this point, it is important to note that other than what is pictured here, we do not know that much about what was produced by Supersol, much less how long they were actually produced. Regardless, the Argentinean Ultraman figures are some of the most unique Ultra Kaiju ever produced. Let's hope in the coming years that many more find their way to the surface.

Additional help for this article, as well as Ultraman Science Patrol plane, Ultraman coin bank, yellow Billiken Ultraman and Ultraman 80 pirouette photos were provided by Pablo M. Montemurro of Montesito Hobbies in Buenos Aires.

TOKYO
JPN

BUENOS
AIRES

ARG

TRAVEL VISA YEAR:

1969





Top: Supersol header card front and back.

Right: Supersol blue Peguira figure.

Bottom: 15cm yellow plastic figure by Billiken, Ultraman 80 pirouette figure by Magimundo MR.





MASCHINEN KRIEGER

BY JASON EATON

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO MODEL GRAPHIX

ILLUSTRATIONS KOW YOKOYAMA PHOTOS JASON EATON / MASATAKA SHINOBE / JEFF DEY

You might remember them, those odd, slightly expensive brown boxes on the hobby shelf with a decidedly retro feel. The packaging was unlike anything else on the shelves, and the artwork on the box tops offered up a strange vision of an embattled robotic landscape dominated by power suits and autonomous drones unmistakably inspired by Teutonic World War II design. It was the mid 1980s, and the kits were released under the enigmatic label SF3D. At the time, those outside of Japan could only learn about SF3D from either the role-playing game "SF3D" or the source, Hobby Japan, the magazine where it all began.

In 1982, a graphic designer named Kow Yokoyama began designing what would soon become a world populated by armored fighting suits, battling it out in a pseudo-replay of WWII. Yokoyama-san was a popular illustrator for magazines and an accomplished military mod-

eler, and designed his retro-futuristic mecha as a response to the waning first wave of the popular Gundam series. The back story of SF3D takes place on a future Earth in the process of being recolonized after having been rendered uninhabitable. It is the late 2800s, and two main factions are at war: The mercenary forces can be seen as the "Allied forces" and are generally considered to be a little more rag-tag than the Strahl Demokratisch Republic, the omnipresent "Axis forces".

Yokoyama-san's drawings and kit-bashed models first appeared in the May, 1982 issue of Hobby Japan in a one-off article entitled "Wonderful Junk Kit!". The first design featured was the "Armored Fighting Suit," constructed by Yokoyama-san using a Takara Microman, ping pong balls for armor plating, putty, and other materials. Response was so positive that the magazine's editor, Hiroshi Ichimura, decided to showcase



BOXED MODELS

- 01. Wave "Raptor" and Model Kasten "Dora" with Yokoyama-san artwork
- 02. Nitto "Gustav" set with decals
- 03. Nitto "Jerry" kit with optional "Grief" Wonderfest kit
- 04. Nitto "Krachenvogel" with metal parts
- 05. "Neuspotter" and "Krachenvogel"
- 06. Nitto "Kröte" and Model Kasten "Küster"
- 07. Model Kasten "Oskar"
- 08. Silicon Tribe "Snake Eye" and Model Kasten "Snake Eye"
- 09. Wonderfest exclusives, including "F-Boot" Hovercraft & "Mk. 41" suit
- 10. Various Yellow Submarine suits

the designs in a series of articles without approval from the chief editor. This was to be a fateful decision. Ichimura-san coined the phrase "SF3D Original" for this new endeavor. Yokoyama-san approved of the idea, and both men set to work, without taking the concept too seriously.

Yokoyama-san would make the model and explain its background story to Ichimura-san, who would then write the text. Material was borrowed from WWII media – terms such as "Strahl" and "Bomvul und Zionel" were taken from the film U-Boat, and the rest was simply made up by Ichimura-san. Yokoyama-san, as always, was primarily concerned with the models and designs. When Yokoyama-san created the Super A.F.S. power suit, the men decided to offer a resin kit to readers. They were met with over two thousand requests.

Nitto, a model kit company, caught wind of the phenomenon and were given permission to make injection plastic kits of the SF3D hardware. The model company always deferred to Yokoyama-san and Ichimura-san throughout the kit development process, and gave them creative control over packaging and kit design. Soon thereafter, the package design was reworked by Kunitaka Imai, fresh from a trip to Germany, who would lend his Bauhaus-influenced hand to the iconic model kit packaging. The packaging was unlike anything else on the shelves. The layout was minimal and evoked the 1940s with its parchment-like paper and typography.

Nitto would release the AFS design in 1984 as the world's first truly multi-media sci-fi kit. All SF3D kits were shipped with springs, hoses, wires, photo-etched parts, and more. The AFS sold for 700 yen, and the injection mold plastic was extremely well engineered. In conjunction with the release, Hobby Japan published a groundbreaking article detailing the design process and production molds. It was an enormous success, even boosting the sales of related products, such as the Microman figures. High on the wave of SF3D mania, the AFS was followed by many other kits over the next few years.

In 1986, Hobby Japan fired Ichimura-san for running the unapproved series, and the line abruptly ended. Nitto was nearly put out of business, and the models all but faded from the public view. Ichimura-san went on to found the magazine Model Graphix and Yokoyama-san continued his career as a designer. If you remember the Playstation video game "Kileak," you remember his design work. SF3D, however, quickly became the stuff of legend.

Ten years later, Ichimura-san began to realize that in his travels abroad, he often saw SF3D kits represented at hobby events. Simultaneously, Yokoyama-san was receiving a stream of SF3D fan letters from abroad, and magazines were featuring the kits. When he connected to the Internet for the first time, Yokoyama-san was amazed to discover SF3D fan sites in Japan, USA, and Australia.

Coincidentally, Nitto was trying to resurrect itself, and asked Yokoyama-san to reissue the kits. He agreed, but Hobby Japan refused. A court decided that Yokoyama-san held the intellectual rights to the designs, but the name "SF3D" was registered to the magazine. Some faithful fans abroad were contacted, and a new name was coined – Maschinen Krieger ZVB3000, which was a term used previously in the series, with the "ZVB3000" added. This name is usually contracted and appears as "Ma.K." (It is also a nod to the Macintosh Computer, which the Ma.K. designers use).

By the late 1990s, Maschinen Krieger, or "Ma.K." was back. Nearly all of the kits saw re-release, and the Internet helped greatly with series exposure. Fans outside of Japan relied on Hobby Link Japan and Sentai to get the kits again, and eBay was always a source for the originals. Model Graphix continues to support Ma.K., showcasing new designs and reports on upcoming kits and figurines.

So what does the future hold for Ma.K. and Kow Yokoyama? He has recently exhibited work for Nike as part of the "White Dunk" exhibition, continues to illustrate, has designed toys for Wave/Tomy, and, of course, actively builds the Maschinen Krieger universe in the magazine Model Graphix. There are rumors of an impending film, and some claim to have seen test animations. Cross your fingers!



Top: "Fledermaus" - built from a Nitto kit

Above left: Max Factory "Snake Eye" - a Wonderfest exclusive

Above right: "SAFS Mk. 1" - built from a Nitto kit and customized by the author (from the collection of Lisa Bailer)

Left: "Falke" - scratch built by Yokoyama-san from a P-38 and Honda S800 model kit, Ping Pong balls, a Yakult Yogurt Drink Bottle, and more...

CHAPTER ONE

S.A.F.S.

SNAKE EYE

A.F.S.

FIRE BALL SG

RACCOON

RAPTOR





For a new fan the world of Ma.K. can be confusing. Here's your crash course on who makes what.

Nitto – still re-releasing the original 1/20th scale line of kits, with the exception of the Neuspotter and Krachenvogel. Ma.K. lore holds that parts of the original molds were either lost in a fire, or accidentally sold, but this is pure speculation. Pick up a Prowler if you can, as it comes with extra sprues that allow great flexibility in making any number of suits.

Model Kasten – this company released new 1/20th scale kits by bundling resin pieces with Nitto sprues, so that the modeler could make some of the newer designs. They are expensive and mostly out of production, but the resin is completely flawless.

Silicon Tribe – Makers of a small line of 1/16th scale resin power suit kits. These are out of production but prized for their level of detail and ability to be posed “open”.

Wave – Wave is releasing new 1/20th scale designs by bundling Nitto sprues with new injection-molded sprues that, much like the Model Kasten kits, allow the modeler to make a newer suit or mech.

Yellow Submarine – This company has been releasing 1/35th scale pre-painted PVC suits and are amazingly detailed and decorated for their low price. These are collectible and randomly packaged.

Medicom – There are two series of Ma.K. Kubricks now, and a few one-off sets.

Max Factory – So far they have released a 1/16th “Snake Eye” suit in six variations in pre-painted and pre-assembled form, with exceptional detail and the ability to “open” showcasing the pilot.

Finally, if you ever find yourself in Japan for the Wonderfestival, you can buy fan made limited edition licensed garage kits, which are sold exclusively at the convention.

Above: Painting by Yokoyama-san of a pilot ejecting from a “Reynard” suit. The geometry of the suits are ambiguous enough to inspire debate among fans. There are two theories about suit operation. Some believe the pilot slides their arms into the suit arms, to operate controls located at the elbow joints. Others believe the pilot operates the suit via a mental/telepathic link while holding arms crossed against chest.

Right: Yellow Submarine “SAFS” suits and a “HAFS Gladiator”. All painted for Winter operation. The fanciful Snowmen also illustrate how the suits lend themselves to a pop sensibility.



CHAPTER TWO

A.F.S.

S.A.F.S.

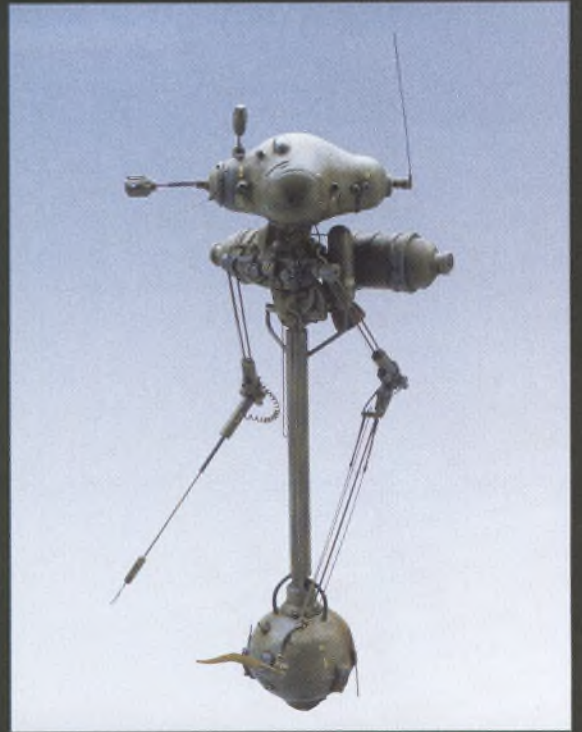
SNAKE EYE

RAPTOR

FIRE BALL SG

RACCOON





Opposite page:

Clockwise from top left: Medicom "Snake Eye" Kubrick, Series one. "Neuspotter" built from a Nitto kit. Medicom Ma.K. "Kow Bears and AFS" - the AFS and matching Bear were a 2004 Wonderfest Exclusive set. Various Ma.K. Kubricks from series one and two. A third series is set for a Spring release.

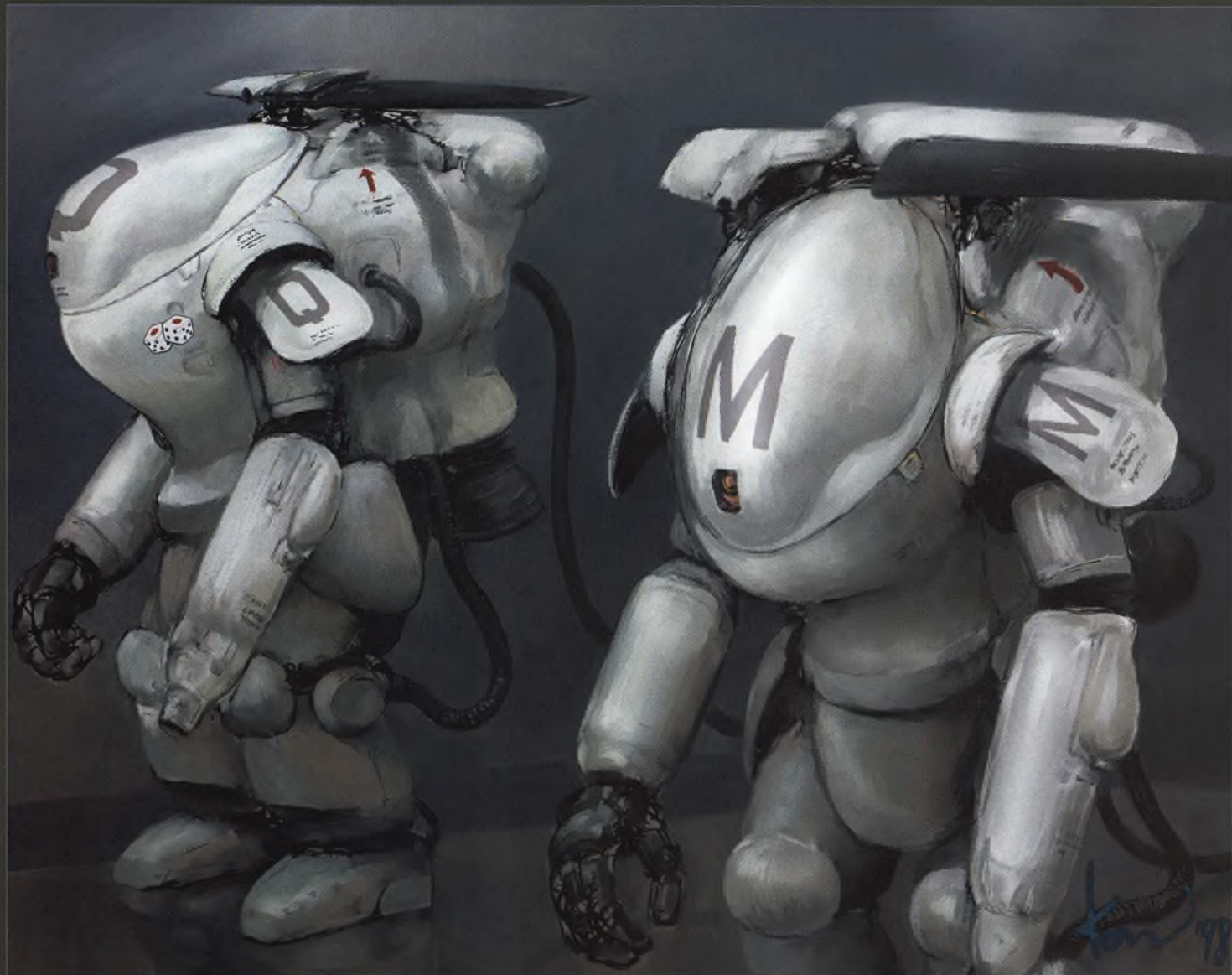
This page:

Right: SG Prowler model, a kitbash of the "Fireball SG" and "Prowler" kits.

Below left: Yellow Submarine "Melusine" suits.

Below middle: Varying scales across the range of products. Smallest to largest - 1/35th Yellow Submarine figures, "somewhat larger" Kubricks, 1/20th Model Kits, 1/16th Max Factory figures, and Nitto 1/6th vinyl kits (background)

Below: Painting by Yokoyama-san of two "Snake Eye" suits. The "Snake Eye" is a suit designed for space warfare (note the engine bells and internal tanks).





TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
ED SANDFORD OF ROBOT-JAPAN.COM

LORE OF THE

GOOD FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE-57

CAUTION!



WELL CRAFTED ROBOTS ARE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE AND MAY BE HABIT FORMING. USE OF SUCH TOYS CAN LEAD TO OBSESSIVE BEHAVIOR, JEALOUSY, AND LOSS OF INCOME. OWNING THESE TOYS WILL NOT HELP YOU PICK UP GIRLS.

SUPER7

Not many people are aware that die-cast metal robots were sold in America around 1982. Fewer still recognize that there were transformers before "Transformers", but collectors and Generation X kids may be able to dredge up distant memories of a sparkling ultra-robot collection of ten. At that time, we were introduced to "an innovative series of Super Robots". Godaikins represent one of the most ambitious metal meshing, missile-launching robot projects in US toy history. We gained exposure to names such as Guardian, Tetsujin 28, Godsigma, and GoLion, along with the very foreign and up-and-coming company Bandai.

One could argue that the inception of Godaikin robots began in a trendy New York toy shop Forbidden Planet. As it would turn out, the store owner Mike Luckman happened upon some of the most sought after toys of the twentieth century. His Manhattan New York store began distributing Japanese toys once it opened in 1981. Through a fortunate set of events, he helped embolden Bandai to bring us the Kin of Gods (Go-dai-kin) robot collection.

"We used to buy Japanese robots, distributed in California, and we used to sell tons of them," recalls Luckman. "And, what happened one day, people from Bandai came in. They were in the country for some reason. And they could not believe we were selling all these toys to adults... because, in Japan, they sell them to kids. Long story short, they agreed to supply me directly from Japan."

"We used to sell huge amounts of toys called Machine Robots- Gobots. And Bandai actually offered us an exclusive on Machine Robots in the United States. And obviously the quantity was so high we never did it, which was crazy because then Tonka did it and it ended up being the biggest selling toys for three straight years. We weren't set up to handle something like that [in 1983]."



R1

VOLTES V DX FRONT

This robot has a removable sword hilt in the chest and diecast metal throughout the toy. Magnets on the foot vehicles can extend to pick up objects and fists can be replaced with a drill or spinning top.



R1

VOLTES V DX BACK

The rear of Voltes V has rubber tank tracks and military features. Kids can pivot the tank tracks around 180° and bend the ankles 90° to make a tank. The body folds down into a missile shooting fortress.

U.S. TOY RELEASES

RELEASE ONE 1982 / 1983

TETSUJIN 28 DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOLTES V DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMBATTRA DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOGGLE V DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GARDIAN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUN VULCAN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOD MARZ DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GODSIGMA DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOLION DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
DALTANIAS DX	<input type="checkbox"/>

RELEASE TWO 1984

DAITETSUJIN 17 DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEOPARDON DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAIMOS DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
BIOMAN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL BIOMAN ST	<input type="checkbox"/>
DYNAMAN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL DYNAMAN ST	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAIDEJIN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
MACHINE DOLPHIN	<input type="checkbox"/>
DYJUPITER (Big scale toy)	<input type="checkbox"/>

WINDOW BOX 2ND VERSIONS

GODMARZ DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMBATTRA DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GUARDIAN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOGGLE V 1984 DX	<input type="checkbox"/>

RELEASE THREE 1985 / 1986

GOGGLE CAESAR (Big scale toy)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAILEION DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
VAVILOS DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL VAVILOS ST	<input type="checkbox"/>
DANCOUGAR DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL DANCOUGAR ST	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALBEGAS SHIPS (Related to Voltron II)	<input type="checkbox"/>
LASERION DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL LASERION ST	<input type="checkbox"/>
MACHINEMAN DX	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMALL MACHINEMAN ST	<input type="checkbox"/>
SHUTTLEBASE FOR MACHINEMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>

MINI GODAIKINS 1984

VOLTES V	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEOPARDON	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMBATTRA	<input type="checkbox"/>
GREAT MAZINGA	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAITETSUJIN 28	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRANDIZER	<input type="checkbox"/>

"Then they talked to us about doing robots in English packaging for the American market. That's basically where Godaikins came from. I agreed to help them. We basically had a bunch of meetings trying to work out how to distribute this stuff, prices, whatever. At one meeting, they asked us to come up with some names."

"I came up with Godakin and they loved it," says Luckman. "But it was easier to say Godaikin with an extra 'I'. They began talking about god and kin and it was the family of Gods, a family of gods flying around in the sky looking after everybody."

"And what [eventually] happened was the sales just weren't strong enough because they were expensive. That was the main reason it didn't go further. It was too expensive of a proposition. People were not really used to an expensive Japanese product. In this country people are geared towards cheaper, mass market toys. [The Godaikins were] out of the ordinary-- expensive, display orientated toys very difficult to go into small stores. In those days, it was very, very difficult."

Now, there is a large debate on the value and rarity of Godaikins. My ratings will be based on experience, countless hours of discussions with collectors, and over ten years of monitoring sales. Price ratings are based on auctions and private sales of near perfect toys in near perfect boxes. Actual prices tend to wax and wane as the exchange rate for the dollar varies and as the economic cycles churn. I also find it difficult to make an absolute price when there are very few "perfect" toys on the market. Collectors will find a great price fluctuation due to tarnishing, box condition, completeness, broken parts, and normal factory flaws. Five stars is the maximum rating.

My definition of die-cast content is a hybrid between density and overall weight. For example, Tetsujin 28 has a large amount of plastic inner workings and back panels. But the weight of the leg, chest, and arm panels is massive, giving the toy a four star rating.

Difficulty to find is the final score card. It is not the same as rarity. For example, a toy may be mass produced but cherished and kept off the market by private collectors. I am discounting the effect of reproductions and similar imitations. Collectors should also note that Godaikins such as Voltes V, Godsigma, and Goggle V were produced for at least three years while GoLion and Tetsujin 28 were only produced for one year.



GOGGLE ROBO DX FRONT

Goggle V was one of the least expensive first release Godaikins, yet still pricey at \$45. It featured a solid diecast truck (legs), a thick diecast back (tank), and then a red diecast jet (head and chest front).



GOD MARZ FRONT

GodMarz has a unique 6 transforming robot design. All 6 glossy robots feature heavy diecast chests and one chrome armament plus a few extras for each toy robot. The toy has twelve firing fists.



GOD MARZ DX OUTER BOX

Box art for GodMarz and the entire Godaikin line was produced in the United States. Parts were shipped from Japan and then repackaged with domestic boxes and literature.



GOD MARZ DX INNER TRAY

A typical Godaikin inner tray contains all of the separate components and accessories that make up the robot.



R1

SUN VULCAN DX FRONT

Sun Vulcan has a chest that transforms into a white space jet and legs that form construction equipment. His toes form plows, legs hinge open to reveal cranes, and the legs expand sideways to reveal wheels.



R1

GOD SIGMA DX FRONT

This was one of the mid-priced Godaikins with a well thought out transformation. The outer chest makes a jet, the torso a robot, and each leg unfolds to make robots. Inside the chest mantle is a faux diamond.



R1

COMBATTRA DX FRONT

Sporting a rubber pair of suspenders, Combattara DX sets the standard for diecast robot excellence. This 1976 robot design comes with a gaggle of accessories and led sinker heft.



R1

DALTANIAS DX OUTER BOX

Daltanious is arguably the best sculpted toy of the group. There is incredible detailing in the lion mane and chromed flame sword. The yellow and blue legs which form a space ship are heavy diecast.



R1

GOLION DX FRONT

GoLion is known to most of the English speaking world as Voltron. The five lion toy sparked Matchbox to license this toy (shown here) and dub cartoons for the U.S. (Voltron, Defender of the Universe).



R1

DAIDENJIN DX FRONT

Diminutive Daidenjinn is a simple and effective design. The entire robot can fold down into a space ship with landing gear that folds out of the chest. Both feet have metal rollers underneath and each fist can fire.

R1



GARDIAN DX

OUTER
BOX

Gardian features missile compartments on the shins, shooting fists, and a heavy diecast metal chest. Blue metal flake paintwork is quite superb as is the paint on each nested robot.

R1



GARDIAN DX

STAGE
1

Gardian's body hinges at the shoulders. This unusual Godaikin features several hidden figures, like a nesting doll. As with all Godaikins, there is a chrome sword and shield included with the set.

R1



GARDIAN DX

STAGE
2 & 3

Prototese with Delinger and a rubber driver inside.

R1



TETSUJIN 28 DX

FRONT

Tetsujin 28 or Iron Man 28 is the largest Godaikin produced and hovers around 16 inches in height. Modeled after the 1950's Tetsujin anime, the design received a face lift in 1981.

R1



TETSUJIN 28 DX

OUTER
BOX

Super-sized Tetsujin 28 towers above the other Godaikins. Each metal arm and leg panel can swing open on a magnetic hinge.

R1



TETSUJIN 28 DX

INNER
BOX

Inside the box you can see all of the chrome detailing that hides beneath arm, chest, and leg panels. There are two magnetic robot boys and two all chrome robots that stick onto Tetsujin's metal body.

GODAIKINS SERIES 1 ROBOTS (1982-1983)

TETSUJIN 28 DX

Tetsujin 28 or Iron Man 28 is the largest Godaikin produced and hovers around 16 inches in height. Modeled after the 1950s Tetsujin anime, the design received a face lift in 1981 and more closely mimicked a Myrmillo style gladiator of ancient roman times. Note the helmet crest and face guard. It was licensed in 1981 and then produced for a single year for distribution in the United States. Tetsujin 28 is currently the most sought after Godaikin and may even be the rarest of the series. Collectors just don't sell their T-28 unless the price is high. Expect to pay well over a grand for a boxed example. Completeness and condition demand a very large premium.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

SUN VULCAN DX

Sun Vulcan traces its ancestry to Sentai Series toys; recognize that it came 10 years before the United State's Power Rangers branding. Five men in the Japanese cartoon drove the Vulcan Jet and Vulcan Crane into battle. Yellow shoulder missiles fire from the toy's arms. Chrome wedge missiles fire from the leg sides. Toes unfold into chrome plows. Each crane is equipped with metal chains. Be aware that the legs and folding wings of the jet require care and tend to be fragile.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

GARDIAN DX

Guardian represents a robot style similar to Russian nesting dolls (a.k.a. a stacking Matryoshka doll). Daigo, a one inch rubber man, nests inside the 3.5 inch Protteser who nests inside the 6.5 inch Delinger who then fits inside 12 inch Guardian. Production of Guardian spanned at least two years from 1983 to 1984. Collectors will find a first version box with cover art and a second version box in a window box with clear cellophane revealing the toy below. Collectors should be aware that almost all have fractured knee detents. The blue plastic inside the knee caps breaks with age; they become brittle and loose their spring.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

GOD MARZ DX

God Marz represents the most complex Gattai toy of the first series. Six robots form the main toy, one for each limb, one for the chest, and then a driver. The weight of the entire toy is impressive, as is the design of God Gaear fitting inside. As with Guardian, there were two box versions of this toy. The initial release featured a photo of the toy while the later 1984 incarnation had a cellophane window box presentation. It is worth noting that God Marz (as with Guardian, Godsigma, and Daltanious) was knocked off in Taiwan. The fit, finish, and overall quality of the original is noticeably higher. Be careful not to lose the two, tack-sized chrome hover cars packaged next to God Gaear, the red robot.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

GOGGLE V DX

Goggle V is a brick of die-cast with solid metal legs, a metal chest plate, and a metal back plate. The design is a study of simple and effective transformations with great looking vehicles. Goggle Jet has flip out rudders and fins, extending wings, and fold down landing gear. Goggle Tank opens like a clamshell and holds the compacted Goggle arms. Treads flip out and the missile launcher flips up on the tank. Goggle Dump is a truck with a hidden lift and cargo bed. Collectors should note that the Goggle Tank latch and its missile launcher tend to wear the most, but, overall, the toy is very sturdy.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

COMBATTRA DX

Combattarra (known as Combattler in Japan) represents a dense, top-heavy beauty of robot design. The box has more than 20 missiles, rubber suspenders, toe magnets, five hand attachments, and can transform into "tank mode". Combattarra is a seminal gattai robot, marking Bandai's first large die-cast combination robot to see production. Back in Japan, the toy was released around 1977 and it ushered in the idea of large combining toy robots. The toy chips quite easily when transforming, so don't be too alarmed if head and waist connectors have wear on secondhand toys. Also be aware that the magnets that hold the legs are weak (hence suspenders). The top heavy design makes a delicate display model.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

DALTANIOUS DX

Daltanious, with swirling blade flames and flowing lion manes, set this Godaikin in the limelight. Daltanious sparked the trend of incorporating lions into robot designs. The head and inner chest separate into the black robot Atlas. Unfold the legs, eject out the wings and pinchers, and unfold grippers to reveal the spaceship Gunper. Finally, the robot chest can expand into a beautifully sculpted male lion Velarios. Some toy distributors used a chrome display base with Daltanious as an advertisement. Arm joints on the Atlas are the weak part of the toy design and often break. Also be aware that the 16+ small red missiles are easily lost.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

GODSIGMA DX

Godsigma is one of the cleanest transforming designs, in my opinion. Yellow Earth King robot and blue Ocean King robot flawlessly fold up into the feet of Godsigma. Black Thunder King robot enlarges, gets a jet backpack, larger fists, and gets lasers to make the upper torso. Each robot gladiator can hold its own in terms of aesthetics and gets firing hands and at least two armaments. Godsigma was priced in the middle of the pack in 1983 at around \$75 and continued to be produced through 1985. If you purchase a Godsigma be aware that the Ocean and Earth King thumbs were brittle. Also note that the blue plastic can become brittle with heat or sunlight.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

GOLION DX

GoLion was a very popular anime featuring five lions that formed into a single robot. GoLion was only offered in the initial 1982-83 run of Godaikins and was quickly dropped by Bandai America. I surmise that there was some licensing wrangling between Matchbox, who would soon issue Voltron (the English-dubbed American version of the original anime) toys, and Bandai America. Casual robot fans will view him as Voltron 3, but GoLion came first and had all the extra missile launchers and accessories that were eliminated from the Matchbox release. GoLions survived after years of play, so if you find a loose one check for details like yellowing and verify which version of the toy it really is. Missile launchers on the black lion's shoulders, inside the blue lion's head, and chrome in the arm joints tell you Godaikins and early Japanese releases apart from the later copies. GoLion scored high marks from me as a kid with poseable arms, leg movement, a chrome flame sword, and missile launchers.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

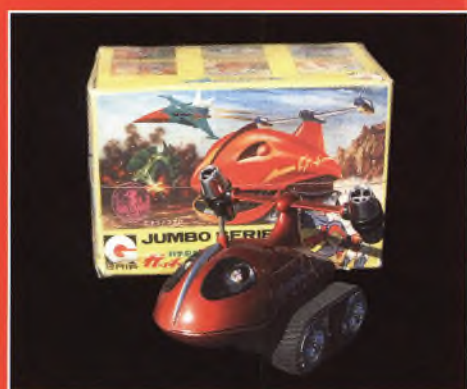
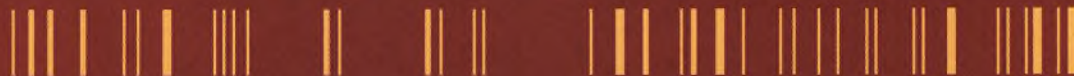
VOLTES V DX

Voltes V might very well be the best Godaikin when you consider its design, play value, and aesthetics. It has a tank, wheeled rover, jet, marine jet, large robot mode, and then forms into an additional Battle Crusier. Hinge the toy at the ankles, rotate the treads, fold up the arms, and then we have a large battle tank too. The red sword hilt fits inside the chest. As with Combattarra, we have over 20 missiles and countless other accessories including a spinning top and rubber fuel hoses. Collectors should be careful of the one design flaw on the toy: second hand Voltes Vs and even unopened boxed specimens often have their head joint break in shipping. The parallel hinge design just didn't have enough strength and was especially vulnerable if the toy tipped over backward.

RARITY ■■■■□ DIECAST CONTENT ■■■■□ DESIRABILITY / PRICE ■■■■□

GATCHAMAN

PART II



01

02

03

01. Jumbo Grip G-1
02. Jumbo Grip G-5
03. Jumbo Grip G-4

GATCHAMAN DIECAST

GRIP /

In 1972, Grip/Eidai was the emperor of the Japanese die-cast toy companies. The company was very successful selling small, super detailed die-cast vehicles of various television character shows. Not only Japanese shows, but others like Batman, Thunderbirds, UFO, and more. Gatchaman was one of Grip's top toy lines and they made all five of the micro size vehicles, each about three inches long. There was the G-1 Jet piloted by Ken, the Eagle, the G-2 Car piloted by Joe, the Condor, the G-3 Sonic Car, a jet-powered motorcycle piloted by Jun, the Swan, the G-4 Helico Buggy piloted by Jinpei, the Swallow, and the G-5 God Phoenix piloted by Ryu, the Horned Owl. Of the five vehicles, the G-2 car is the hardest to find and was made in two colors: blue or red. Either color seems equally as hard to find (although the vehicle was blue in the cartoon).

In addition to the G-1 thru G-5 vehicles, Grip produced a die-cast toy of the Red Impulse and the Super Sneider (from Gatchaman episode 57). The Red Impulse is almost impossible to find, while the Super Sneider is the easiest of all the Gatchaman Grip toys. There are rumors of a die-cast Ken action figure, a vehicle of Grip's own design piloted by Ken (sold as a Gatchaman toy), and the Turtle King- the enemy mecha from the first episode. These three Grips are very rare and may have only been prototypes, as I've yet to even see pictures of them other than drawings.

Grip also made die-cast toys of the Gatchaman G-1, G-4, and G-5 vehicles in their Jumbo Grip line. These were about 4 inches to 6 inches long: the size of most ST Popy die-casts. All three were super detailed and had an action feature. There is rumor that the G-2 Race Car and G-3 Sonic Car were also made in the jumbo size. There was one more Gatchaman Grip die-cast but it was really just a Gatchaman sticker on the box of a Jaguar XK-E. This vehicle was supposed to be Joe's car in non-transformed state but, of course, looks nothing like it.

POPY /

By 1978, Popy was king of the die-cast hill. The company acquired the rights to Gatchaman and started making toys for the current Gatchaman II series and also made a nostalgic toy of the old-style God Phoenix, copied from the mold of the Jumbo Grip. Popy had a little trouble numbering this one. The box was originally numbered PB-78 but was later given to the Future Comet from Captain Future. The Popy God Phoenix is now referred to as the "alternate" PB-78. The toy itself had the number PB-81 stamped on it which also turned out to be a different Popy toy, the Ganpa vehicle, a section of the Deluxe Daltanious.

GATCHAMAN II POPY /

Gatchaman II started in 1978. The vehicles for the new show were very different from the first season and were given new names. The G-1 Eagle Sharp, the G-2 Condor Attacker and the G-3 Auto Swan were updated versions of the G-1 Jet, G-2 Race Car, and G-3 Sonic Car. Jinpei's G-4 Helico Buggy became the G-4 Swallow Helico- a helicopter-like ship with a big, bulbous cockpit. For Gatchaman II, Ryu was given his own vehicle, the G-5 Horned Tank, labeled "Hound Tank" on the Popy box. Now that Ryu had the Hound Tank to drive, the new God Phoenix (with an updated, birdlike design) was piloted by Pimer- a cute-looking robot much like the robot Tonto from Message from Space. This robot not only piloted the new G-5 but waited hand-and-foot on the Gatchaman crew. Pimer was definitely a superior robot to 7-Zark-7 from Battle of the Planets.

Popy made the new God Phoenix in a Standard and Deluxe version. Each of these God Phoenixs came with five small plastic vehicles. The vehicles for the ST new God Phoenix were molded in white plastic while the vehicles for the DX version were molded in red with a "Firebird"

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALEX COHN
 ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BY WARREN SCHWARTZ



04

05

06

- 04. Mini grip G-1 Jet
- 05. Mini grip G-3 Sonic-Car
- 06. Mini grip G-4 Helico Buggy

07

08

09

- 07. Mini grip G-2 car (red)
- 08. Mini grip G-2 car (blue)
- 09. Mini grip G-2 car (green)

10

11

12

- 10. Mini grip Red Impulse
- 11. Mini grip Super Sneider
- 12. Mini grip G-5 God Phoenix

variation in the paint scheme. The remaining Gatchaman vehicles only came in ST versions, though a few have slight variations such as the G-5 Horned Tank available with a wind-up motor (which came in a black box) and without the motor.

In addition to the vehicles, Popy released die-cast toys of Pimer and the Gatchaman II G-Town Base. Pimer came with a serving tray, tea set, and stickers. Additionally, Pimer had a friction motor. You could push him forward and let him take off under his own power. The G-Town base came with a miniature plastic God Phoenix II and very small rub-

ber figures of the Gatchaman team. A Jumbo Machinder of Pimer was also produced. Made mostly of plastic, this toy has much of the same features of the Popy die-cast.

GATCHAMAN F / GATCHAMAN FIGHTER

By Gatchaman F, the series had lost its steam and selling power. Popy made one last stab and produced the Gatcha Spartan. This was a triangle-shaped ship assembled from five smaller vehicles. Popy made a 6 inch long die-cast and a DX edition, about 12 inches long made mostly of plastic. Each Spartan included small, rubber Gatchaman Team figures.



13

14

15

- 13. Grip Jaguar XK-E
- 14. Popy G-3 Auto Swan
- 15. Popy God Phoenix

16

17

18

- 16. Popy G-1 Eagle Sharp
- 17. Popy G-4 Swallow Helico
- 18. Popy G-Town Base

19

20

21

- 19. Popy G-2 Condor Attacker
- 20. Popy G-5 Motorized Hound Tank
- 21. Popy Die-Cast Pimer

Gatchaman I Grip

<input type="checkbox"/>	G-1 Jet	11
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-2 Car	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-3 Sonic Car	13
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-4 Helico Buggy	14
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-5 God Phoenix	15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Super Sneider	27
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red Impulse	31
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ken the Eagle	52
<input type="checkbox"/>	Turtle King	???
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ken on vehicle of Grip's design	???

Gatchaman I Jumbo Grip

<input type="checkbox"/>	G-1 Jet	J-1
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-2 Race Car	???
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-3 Sonic Car	???
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-4 Helico Buggy	J-3
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-5 God Phoenix	J-2

Gatchaman I Popy

<input type="checkbox"/>	God Phoenix	PB-78
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Gatchaman II Popy

<input type="checkbox"/>	G-1 Eagle Sharp - small Ken	PB-63
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-1 Eagle Sharp - large Ken	PB-63
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-2 Condor Attacker	PB-64
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-3 Auto Swan	PB-65
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-4 Swallow Helico	PB-66
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-5 Hound Tank	PB-67
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-5 Hound Tank-motorized wind-up	PB-67
<input type="checkbox"/>	ST God Phoenix	PB-73
<input type="checkbox"/>	DX New God Phoenix	PB-72
<input type="checkbox"/>	DX New God Phoenix-Firebird Variation	PB-72
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pimer	GA-92
<input type="checkbox"/>	G-Town Base	PB-68

Gatchaman Fighter

<input type="checkbox"/>	ST GATCHA SPARTAN	PB-94
<input type="checkbox"/>	DX GATCHA SPARTAN	PB-89-93



22

23

22. Popy ST & DX New God Phoenix
23. Popy action figure set

24

25

24. Popy ST Gatcha Spartan
25. 7 ZARK 7 & 1 ROVER 1 magnetic figures from France

26

27

26. Popy DX Gatcha Spartan
27. Uni-Five Die-Cast God Phoenix

BANDAI GODZILLA HANG TAGS

TEXT AND TAG PHOTOS BY RICHARD COX / ADDITIONAL TAG PHOTOS BY MIKE JOHNSON

From the beginning, the Bandai Godzilla series of eight-inch vinyl figures were different from the kaiju toys that came before. They are generally more detailed and photo-realistic than any of the earlier releases, and unlike the Bullmarks, Marusans, and Popsys of years before - did not come bagged with a header card. Instead, Bandai took a new approach, attaching a small cardboard tag to each of the figures via a plastic hanger, which basically performs

the same function as a header card. Needless to say, the tags have become a mainstay of Bandai's figure collection. While early on, many collectors couldn't care less whether or not their figure came with a tag attached, or even with a tag at all, as the years have passed by, the presence of the cardboard tag has come to mean more and more in terms of not only the value of a figure, but also its perceived completeness, especially in regards to the earlier figures.



1983-1984 THE GODZILLA COLLECTION

Bandai's earliest figures were released with tags in the same style as their Ultra Collection from the same period (see Super7 #2 for more details). These tags are a smaller size (5cm x 8cm), and are often referred to as "hard tags" or "plastic tags," neither of which is actually accurate. Their reputation for "hardness" comes from a laminated coating used to preserve the image quality over a traditional paper tag. Often these laminates can be seen peeling away on tags that are not kept in good condition.

The 1983-1984 tags featured a sunburst design on the front with the "Godzilla Collection" title and a close-up of the character's head. The reverse side shows a film-still, the character's name in both English and Japanese, and a collection number, which, interestingly enough begins with #31 (Godzilla 1962). Finally, it's worth noting that the images on the Godzilla tags from this period are often incorrect. The Godzilla '62 tag features the 1964 Mosu-Goji on the reverse, while the Godzilla 1964 tag pictures the 1967 Godzilla on its back. All of the Godzilla Collection tags feature either a silver or gold Godzilla copyright sticker.

GODZILLA 1962

GODZILLA 1964

GODZILLA 1984

KING GHIDORAH

MECHAGODZILLA 1962



THE 1988 TAG

From 1984 until 1988, Bandai halted production of full-scale Godzilla kaiju, and in 1988 only produced a couple of reissues, with a brand-new tag design that harkens to things to come. The tag is somewhat larger, and pictures the character on one side with its name on the reverse. And yet again, Bandai mixed up their Godzilla suits- Godzilla '62 appears on the tag for their Godzilla '64 figure. Of all of the tag series, the '88 tags are the hardest as a group to come by, with the Godzilla 1964 being the tougher of the two.

But there was a more important change - a string of three sets of numbers and a bar code that would remain with series to this day. These serial numbers, also known as stock numbers, of a Bandai figure are unique to each toy, thus can be used in order to be sure of getting a correct tag with a figure, which could otherwise be a problem for those earlier figures have tags that bear no distinguishing characteristics. The first string, 205020, is carried by all Bandai Godzilla figures (as well as other Bandai series figures) with a serial number; the second is individual to each figure. The third string denotes the original price of the vinyl toy. Before the '88 tags, the closest to a serial number for any figure was inside bagged versions of the Godzilla 1962 several years before on a slip of paper with a 7-digit similar to the 205020 number.

GODZILLA 1964

KING GHIDORAH

BARAGON

SPACEGODZILLA

DESTROYAH

1989 / 1992 DESTROY ALL MONSTERS

In 1989, Bandai finally released a few new vinyl kaiju figures, and with them came yet another new tag design. Dubbed the Destroy All Monsters (DAM) tag because of the scene from the famous Toho kaiju-fest on the front, the tag actually hung around (no pun intended) through other tag changes until 1992.

The 1989 DAM tags introduced something new to the Bandai figure line: perforation. Why Bandai chose to begin perforating the lower 1/5th of the tags is anyone's guess, but it almost certainly has to do with tearing off the character's name (featured alone on the back of the perforated area) and saving it. The 1989 copyright date is shown prominently on the front, and the gold Official Godzilla Product copyright sticker is featured.

In addition to the many new releases, there were two reissues with the DAM tag, both very rare; Godzilla 1964 and King Ghidorah. Ghidorah is the rarer of the two, with Godzilla '64 being fairly common in comparison. If that wasn't enough to confuse you, there was also a MechaGodzilla 1974 released with the DAM tag in 1989, but this wasn't a reissue per se; the original MechaGodzilla mold had been destroyed and a new mold was cast from an existing 1984 figure, resulting in a slightly different, smaller MechaGodzilla sporting a Destroy All Monsters tag.

In 1992, Toho renewed its copyrights on all of its kaiju, with one result being a re-release of the Bandai figures from 1989. There are tag differences. The perforation is gone, and the 1989 copyright has been replaced by a 1992 date. All of the new releases in 1989 were reissued with the 1992 tags, though the Godzilla '64 King Ghidorah and MechaGodzilla were not. In fact, there was only one figure uniquely bearing the 1992 tag - the sought after Baragon.



ANGILAS

GIGAN

GODZILLA 1964

KING GHIDORAH

MECHAGODZILLA 1974

MEGALON

MINYA

MOTHRA LARVA 1964

RODAN

BARAGON



1991-1994 THEY HAD CHARACTER

During the same period as the Destroy All Monsters tags, a second style of hanger tag was also being released. Very similar in appearance to the DAM tags, there are only two discernable differences between the tag styles. The first, and most obvious, is the photo on the tag, which instead of having a generic DAM image sports a photograph displaying the character depicted by the toy in a movie scene. The second difference is the lack of a perforated lower area. Instead, we have a dashed line, which a child could use as a guide to cut away the character's name from the tag.

And then, there's the anomaly, Bandai's version of the Toho King Kong. This figure was released in 1993 concurrent with the character tag wave, but the tag is unlike anything else in the figure line. Kong's tag does not show either artwork or scenes from any of the films. Instead we get a drawing of a jungle in orange and black, with Kong's name both on the top of and under the picture. The copyrights are attributed to Turner Entertainment Co. and K.I.P., and instead of the gold Official Godzilla Product sticker, there is a gold sticker featuring the K.I.P. logo. Note also that the image on the Official Godzilla Product sticker varies with the year of production (see 1991-1993, Photographic Art & Transitions for details).

GODZILLASAUROS

JET JAGUAR

KAMAKIRAS

KING KONG

MECHANIKONG

MOGERA 1957

MOTHRA LARVA 1961

1991-1993 PHOTOGRAPHIC ART & TRANSITIONS

Bandai produced yet another tag style concurrent with the DAM reissues and the character tags. Beginning with 1991's *Godzilla versus King Ghidorah*, Bandai began releasing their 8-inch figures that tied in directly with a new film with a tag that more closely associated the figures with the movie. Put simply, Bandai took the design of the DAM/Character tag, and replaced the photographs with movie poster paintings or collage artwork. They also removed the Godzilla logo and various other pieces of artwork and replaced them with the logo of the current film. This style of tag lasted through 1993 and the release of *Godzilla versus MechaGodzilla*. But that's not to say there weren't minor changes in the tag during that period.

The first of the two changes to the official poster tags appeared in later releases of the *Godzilla versus King Ghidorah* figures; or, perhaps, disappeared is the correct term, as there are G versus KG figures available both with and without perforation. The change to non-perforated tags probably occurred in early-mid 1992, as there are no *Godzilla versus Mothra* (1992) tags with perforation.

The second of the two important changes was a redesign of the gold Official Godzilla product sticker, which originally featured a simple silhouette of Godzilla. Sometime early-mid 1994, the image was changed to a much more detailed Godzilla, the same as featured on the 1977 Marvel Comics run of *Godzilla* comic books. This date is based on the original 1993 *Godzilla versus MechaGodzilla* figures having the silhouette sticker and the 1994 *Godzilla versus SpaceGodzilla* tags sporting the more detailed sticker. However, given the number of times these figures were issued any number of combinations are possible; I own a 1991 King Ghidorah without perforation and with the later sticker, meaning my "1991" figure was really issued no earlier than late 1993/early-mid 1994. Also released in 1992 were three boxed figures; *Battara Adult*, *Mothra Adult* (1964) and *Mothra Adult* (1992). Each of these figures came in a similarly designed box and, instead of a hanger card, came packaged with a trading card showing a distinct scene from the *Godzilla versus Mothra* film.



- GODZILLA VS. KING GHIDORAH
- GODZILLA 1991
- KING GHIDORAH 1991
- MECHA-KING GHIDORAH
- GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA
- BATTARA LARVA
- GODZILLA 1992
- MOTHRA LARVA 1992
- GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA
- BABY GODZILLA
- FIRE RODAN
- GODZILLA 1993
- MECHAGODZILLA 1993

GODZILLA MEMORIAL BOX

Beyond the standard run of 8-inch *Godzilla* figures they produced during this period Bandai also released three different in the same scale, also bearing their own unique tags.

In 1995, Bandai released the *Godzilla Memorial Box* in conjunction with *Godzilla versus Destroyah*. Featuring fourteen of the more popular 8-inch Bandai from past years, the set of reissued figures is highly sought-after and features a tag style completely unlike those from any previous *Godzilla* release.

The Memorial Box tags weren't hanger tags at all, but instead were more like a small trading card; they came loose, and had no hole within which a hanger would have been inserted. The front of the tag features a film poster appropriate to the individual figure, and the background is designed like brown parchment. The back of the card features the kaiju's name, but note there is no individual serial number; as the figures were sold only as part of the Memorial Box, the set itself has a single serial number on the box.



ANGILAS

BATTRA LARVA

GIGAN

GODZILLA 1962

GODZILLASAUROS

HEDORAH

KING GHIDORAH

M.O.G.E.R.A.

MECHAGODZILLA 1974

MECHAGODZILLA 1993

MEGALON

MOTHRA LARVA 1964

RODAN

SPACE GODZILLA



1994-1995: OPENING THE GATES

In 1994, with the release of the Godzilla versus Space Godzilla tie-in figures, Bandai once again changed the tag style for their 8-inch series figures. In what was the most sweeping change since the initial 1989 move to the DAM style hanger, Bandai completely redesigned their tags. Both the 1994 Godzilla versus Space Godzilla and the '95 Godzilla versus Destroyah tags are gatefold tags, featuring on one side advance artwork for the associated film and on the other side a photo of the depicted character. The inside of the tag features text previously associated with the back of the trading card style tags and a character line drawing, with the only real difference between the layout of the two series being that G versus SG tags featured a line drawing of the character, while the G versus D tag had a generic drawing featuring Godzilla and Destroyah. The only variation in the two series of gatefold tags occurs with the theater edition and mailaway version of the Godzilla 1995, which often (but not always) featured a white sticker with red writing on the tag denoting its limited status and price in Yen. The version with the sticker was available in theaters; the version without was a magazine mail away.

GODZILLA VS. SPACEGODZILLA

GODZILLA 1994

LITTLE GODZILLA

M.O.G.E.R.A. 1994

SPACEGODZILLA

GODZILLA VS. DESTROYAH

DESTROYAH ADULT

DESTROYAH AGRGTE

GODZILLA 1995

GODZILLA JUNIOR



GODZILLA FOREVER

「キングコング対ゴジラ」について (特撮監督・川北紘一氏より)

私が主演して居る最も好きな特撮が「キングコング対ゴジラ」。映画のスーパーヒーローが最高傑作で登場するシーンは、多岐にわたって見られます。ゴジラのマスクもユニークで、その動きも多岐にわたって見られます。

*写真イラストは映画に登場するものです。



GODZILLA FOREVER SERIES

The Godzilla Forever Series debuted in 1996, and included six different re-issued figures, each beautifully repainted. Several were molded in a different color vinyl than the original, and the "resurrected" Godzilla 1993 even has flakes of glitter on it. Unlike those released in the Memorial Box, the Godzilla Forever figures were issued individually, and each toy had its own tag, styled uniquely to the series.

The Godzilla Forever Series hanger tag is, like the Godzilla versus Space Godzilla and Godzilla versus Destroyah hangers, a gatefold tag. The front features a photo of the specific kaiju with its name in kanji and the words "GODZILLA FOREVER" in English. The Official Godzilla product sticker is present, though in silver instead of gold. The reverse side of the tag is generic to all Godzilla Forever figures, and features photographs of Japanese posters for each Godzilla film released through 1995. The inside of the gatefold is also generic, and features a silhouette of Godzilla, numerous bits of text, and the Bandai product/serial numbers.

With all of the emphasis in the collecting hobby on variations and, increasingly, first releases, it can become difficult to weed through everything. In the Bandai 8-inch series alone, there are multiple versions of most figures, and many were released multiple times over a span of years. Having an understanding of the differing styles of Bandai hanger tags is a key element in understanding and dating pieces, or prospective pieces, of your collection.

BABY GODZILLA

FIRE RODAN

GODZILLA 1995

GODZILLA 1962

RSR. GODZILLA 1993

MECHA-KING GHIDORAH



Above left: Popy 8" plastic Robocon
 Above right: Popy 4" vinyl figures on card
 Below: Robocon

1975 saw the arrival of the phenomenally successful show Robocon. Robocon was a strange show to watch. It was live action, but had cute googly-eyed robots whose job it was to help humans. As with anything that is a hit, the Japanese shamelessly copied it to no end. TV companies quickly began searching for other live action shows with cute characters in them. Lots of Robocon clones sprang from the woodwork and a slate of new programs that felt like *The New Zoo Review* on acid littered the airwaves.

One such Robocon clone was *Batten Robocon*. The show was popular enough to run for 51 episodes and, of course, generated much merchandise. Robocon was a detective and he would help humans solve cases. Nothing serious. Robocon did detective work for simple, everyday mysteries. He had a bunch of robot friends to assist him, some being actually helpful, while others just got in his way.

Cute Robocon toys and Robocon-esque toys were quite popular upon their release and, when children who had them grew up, attained a high level of nostalgic interest. Collecting the original set of Chogokin toys of Robocon characters became a serious task for many collectors in the mid-90s. Collectors also took an interest in similar, nostalgic cute-robot toys and Robocon items began appearing on many a want list. This trend was not lost on modern-day TV producers and toy makers as the late '90s saw a revival in cute robot shows and toys with the debut of *Kabutak*, *Robotak* and a new version of Robocon.

ROBO

TEXT BY TOM FRANCK / PHOTOS BY TIM BRISKO
 TOYS FROM THE COLLECTION OF CHAD HENSLEY

Below (left to right): Bazukan and Kapentan



Popy acquired the rights to produce Robomaru toys and released them in a number of different categories. The first was a Chogokin Robomaru (GB94). The toy had a flexible frame around his head to create different expressions on Robomaru. Interestingly, another company, POEM, also produced a die-cast Robomaru figure. The toys are similar in size with Popy's being a little bit bigger.

Popy also made several of the co-stars of the show. However, since they were made with very little metal, they were categorized outside of the "G" numbering system. These Robomaru sidekick toys were called "Karintomates." Seven Karintomates were produced:

Composensei: a robot assembled from stereo components. Just like the character, this toy could separate into a stereo (non functional of course). The assembly of this toy is very complicated and requires extreme dexterity.

Getto: a Gorilla-like monster with a big horn on his head. The toy comes with a block and by activating his tail as a lever you can have Getto pick up a block.

Paratto: a bright yellow four-pointed star type creature. The toy splits in two revealing an even stranger head underneath with googly eyes.

Chyokitto: a cute bug-like creature, who on the show is a hamburger

vendor. It has a port that opens up and sends a hamburger flying out.

Bazukan: a biped canine with a bazooka for a nose. The toy shoots a missile out of his shnoz.

Kapentan: an unusual creature with tools for limbs. He's got a hammer on one hand, pliers on the other, saw blade rabbit ears- move over Tim Allen.

Wanbunya: a dog with a built-in newspaper printing press. You turn a crank on the toy and newspapers come out.

Of the seven, Chyokitto and Wanbunya are the most difficult to find. Getto is the easiest. Popy also made a Deluxe Plastic version of Composensei. The toy is just over fifteen inches tall, bordering on Super Machinder size.

On the vehicle side, Popy made a Batten Saucer for the Popinica Line (PC35). The toy unfolds in a number of ways and is nicely made. A Deluxe Batten Saucer made out of plastic was released as well.

A die-cast motorcycle for Robomaru, the Capsule Bike, was also released by Popy, but, very surprisingly, not in the Popinica line. Although nearly all die-cast, the Capsule Bike is in the Karintomate line. The toy comes with a plastic version of Robomaru who can ride it.

A number of minor toys: little plastic Robomarus and Karintomates, windup Robomarus, Robomaru's wand, and a handful of mini vinyls were made by Popy and Poem and can be found with just a little looking. An eighth Karintomate, Pochi, the big green dinosaur, was planned but never produced. A big town play set, not unlike those in the Playmobile line was intended for Robomaru, but never released. The catalog picture showed the Batten Saucer surrounded by different buildings and streets.

It is not an overwhelming task to collect items from Robomaru as they can really help fill out a shelf of cute-looking nostalgic toys, especially while waiting for rare Robocon Chogokins to turn up...

MARU

Below (left to right): Paratto, Composensai and Chyokitto



Below (left to right): Getto and Wanbunya



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SUPER



DRINK
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AD 4 U

TOYS
YOU WANT SO BAD



スーローフ
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THE ART OF
DAVID HORVATH &
SUN-MIN KIM OF

UGLYDOLL™

BY GEOFF ALLEN



Above: David's old self-portrait
Above right: Sun-Min's Spider-Boom
Opposite page: Exclusive art for Super7



THE WORLD IS AN UGLY PLACE

David Horvath and Sun-Min Kim are the genius masterminds behind the best selling art-toy line Uglydoll. Their work has been featured everywhere from Benetton's Fabrica Features gallery in Hong Kong to the windows of Barney's New York and the Whitney Museum. The Uglydoll vinyl figures will soon be featured at the MOMA in New York City. Sun-Min and David are also preparing for an Uglydoll installation at the Louvre in Paris later this year. Soon after their TV debut in 2006, the Uglydolls are sure to replace the current ugliest of dolls, Regis Philbin.

Due to the intergalactic success of Uglydolls, the diabolical duo of fantastically furry friends have collaborated once again to take over the toy world. This time, the plushy pair are hard at work on Pounda - a loveably overstuffed, green bear-like animal. This snuggably soft guy has outsold everyone's expectations, with the first series of prints already selling out. This modern-day Chewie is now appearing on cell phone downloads and products all over Japan and China. These creative kids are slaving away on new Pounda prints as we speak.

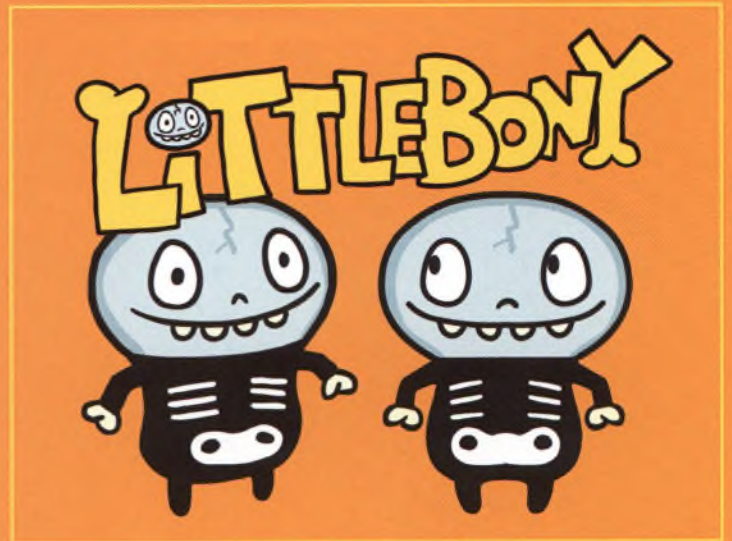
But the fun doesn't stop there. The Ugly elves are amidst cranking out the pages of the Pounda book, and rumor has it that a Pounda vinyl will be ready in time for every toy enthusiast's heaven - Comic Con. Critterbox will be producing a line of Pounda toys later this year, so be sure to check out www.davidhorvath.com for news and updates.

Horvath's latest animated TV series (produced by NHK and Sony Creative) is titled Littlebony. This series about a skeleton-clad little boy reaches out with its positive message and "can do" themes to over 8 million children a day in Japan. Critterbox is producing David's latest toy, a character named Noupa. Future plans for the cute-as-all-get-out character include figures by artist all-stars Gary Baseman, Tim Biskup, Nathan Jurevicius, and, of course, Sun-Min Kim. In conjunction with the release of Horvath's series of Dunny toys, the Dunny Show at the Visionaire Gallery in Soho featured the couple's latest work with Kid Robot.

Move over bacon, there's a new girl in town. Sun-Min has decided to try her hand at the art-toy game with a character named Spider-Boom. This eight-legged eyesore has been the subject of Sun-Min's recent paintings at the GR2 gallery in LA and Fewmany in Tokyo. Her Spider-Boom plush will be crawling the walls this spring and is limited to only 300 pieces. You can catch a sneak peak of this endearing insect at the Critterbox booth at this year's Toy Fair.

Remember, the world is an ugly place - and we can thank David and Sun-Min for it.

*Opposite page: David's latest self-portrait
Below: Noupaland*



*Above: Littlebony - David's latest animated TV series
Below top: Roboville (detail)*

Below bottom: CD art for SUPER CHUNK/MERGE RECORDS 15 year album



**Are the different characters a reflection of yourself/various personalities?
Or are they a reflection of the people you see everyday on the street?**

David: I think Wage was a self-portrait at the time. When I created him, he was just a little guy on the bottom of my letters to Sun-Min. He had an apron on because he was working hard to find a way for us to be together again after she had to move back to Korea. The other characters are a healthy mixture of people we know and people you know.

Sun-Min: I think David and I get most of our ideas for characters from the people and world around us. Our Chihuahua is a Gemini like us and is filled with personality, so maybe some comes from her.

David, your self-portrait reflects someone who hates the office world of cubicles? Is that why you got into toys - as an escape?

David: I've never actually been inside a cubicle but I have seen what happens to people who spend too much time in one. It isn't an escape. It is a rescue mission. I'm comin' to get you out buddy.

Are the worlds that you create a response to the current state of the world, or are they a magical dream world where you would like to live? If so, who lives there?

David: In the busy scenes I create, everyone is standing still or staring into space. There is potential for action but no one does anything, kind a like real life. The Uglydoll world is very busy, many grumpy workers and office dwellers running around complaining and getting high on coffee. The Uglydolls themselves are these little innocent, naive creatures mixed in with them. Most of them have a very positive outlook. Ox and Wedgehead are positive your money is theirs. Noupa may have a mix of the world's current state in there somewhere.

As for Pounda, he lives in a big tree in the middle of the park in the center of a very busy city obsessed with office nonsense and silly shopping. But Pounda's interaction with the folks inhabiting the big city is very different from that of the other stories we write. He's kinda like Godzilla. An enormous green creature making his way through the city, completely unstoppable...only instead of smashing everything he's being nice to everyone. Littlebony, for now, lives in a world void of anything at all besides his puppy, and several obstacles to overcome.

Sun-Min: Spider-Boom's world is the same as ours but her reality is very small because she concentrates on what she's doing, which is mostly eating cake in order to give birth to her babies. No matter how loud or crazy our world is, she's in her own little quiet space focusing on what she has to do. Pounda is very cheerful and very outgoing. If someone is afraid to do something or try something new, Pounda will help them see things a different way. Pounda and his pal Chu Chu are very opposite in personality. Because they are so different, they actually get along better in the end. What one is missing is provided by the other.

Crowded buildings and a sea of shoppers are a repeat theme in your work - is this a reflection of the U.S. or Japan, or both?

David: A mixture of both, I think. If you were to take Manhattan, Nakano, Broadway, and Shibuya and mix them up in a jar, maybe something similar would pop out; an overload of street signs and mix matched rooftops. I think there's a little Seoul in there too, with the "way too many signs" problem. Most works of art are, I'm told, supposed to lead the eye around from one place to another. My busy cities lead the eye nowhere. It's kind of hard to focus on anything. Sort of like the feeling I first had when I went to Japan.

It looks like you enjoy mocking the consumer world, how does it feel to be contributing to it? Do you feel guilty, or do you feel like you are changing what is out there?

David: I don't know how much Sun-Min and I have changed what's out there, but we both hope we have inspired many other creators to do way better than us. Maybe, those people can make some real changes. I make fun of consumer culture because it's so funny and silly to me. I don't think it is wrong to have interests and to bring home things you like. I love to buy books. I would be sad if there was no consumer culture, because then I wouldn't be able to bring home all those neat works of nonfiction I like to read. On the other hand, consumerism was created as part of an evil plan to keep us powerless and scared and I think, for the most part, it's working. Humans are these incredible beings with no limits to what they can accomplish. But a few evil beings want to control the rest of us and keep us in a state of fear. They are afraid we might all wake up someday and ignore them.



20 QUESTIONS WITH DAVID & SUN-MIN

There seem to be a lot of “drones” in your work - do you see the society of big cities as anonymous or mindless?

David: I see a world full of very lonely and frightened people who are capable of such incredible feats, not believing they are powerful. People who were born to change our world and contribute their genius instead choose to do nothing at all. Superman refusing to take off his glasses, I guess. But then there's a few who figure out how silly this is and jump out to give it their best shot. Those people make me really happy.

Who in pop culture influences you - positively or negatively?

David: Sun-Min influences me in a very positive way. Her spider paintings and plush dolls blow me away. The works of Rodney Greenblat, John Hersey, Richard McGuire and Dan Yaccarino, all have a very positive influence for sure. We met the guys from Devilrobots on a recent trip to Japan and we're really impressed by their work ethic and devotion to creating things that make people happy.

Is art overrated?

David: Someone is rating it? If so then I'm in big trouble.

Do people take toys too seriously?

David: Sun-Min and I love remake retro kaiju toys from Japan. But we only buy the ones we like. If we were to let our collector side take over, we would own many toys and be making none. I used to be addicted to Star Wars toys while I was in art school. They would come out with more and more and eventually I felt an actual need to get them all. I wasn't even enjoying it anymore. I would buy toys I didn't even like just to complete my collection, which is so lame. So I gave them all away to my little brother. What a relief. Now, they all have messed up paint with missing arms and legs, like they're supposed to.

Who in the toy world is taking toys where you feel they should go?

David: Critterbox. They do the best job, no doubt about it. They really understand the toy business better than any group of people I have come in contact with. No one can touch them. Some sneaky folks may find out who their factory is or obtain a secret blueprint from them, but nothing will ever come out like how Critterbox does it. It's Elvin magic, and can never be stolen. And they inspire those poor kids working at the main-

stream toy companies to push, pull, tug and struggle to make better toys, which is better for all of us. Medicom also does an incredible job, beautiful packaging and super high quality.

Who would you like to work with in the future - artists, toy geeks, politicians, etc...?

David: We just finished collaborating with Tim Biskup. I "uglyfied" Tim's yeti character and Sun-Min brought 50 of them to life. She sewed them together while we were in Korea. The entire house was covered in white uglyfur, eyeballs, and blue faces. It's our first freestanding plush doll and we're very excited about it. We're supposed to do some Noupas with Baseman and Biskup (the prototypes would freak you out, really) but the line is evolving under the Critterbox banner now, so those may have to wait a bit. We'll make it worth the wait tough, I promise.

Sun-Min: We would love to do some work with Takara and Littletiques. Both of those companies create wonderful toys for children.

In "Ugly Store" you use a lot of generic names for products in your work. Do you see product names, or products in general, as useless? How does consumerism affect you?

David: In Korea I found a toothpaste featuring the slogan "helps protect against calculus." Incredible. Where were they when I was in high school? Although math was my favorite art class.

I don't think all products are useless or evil. But you know what I think is super evil? When someone creates a cheap, crappy product just for the sake of making money, and for no other reason. And if they put tricky packaging around that crappy, poorly made item to sell well? Oh then that really stinks.

But products that have a lot of care and craft behind them? I love 'em. Make more! You know the Japanese version of that giant metal anniversary Optimus Prime? What a beautiful toy and the packaging is top notch. Obviously put together by complete maniacs who are so into what they are doing. That's what I like to see. Takara does some incredible work. Their new metal transformer alternator toys give me hope for the future of the toy business. Yeah but then they cast them in plastic for the USA, so I dunno.

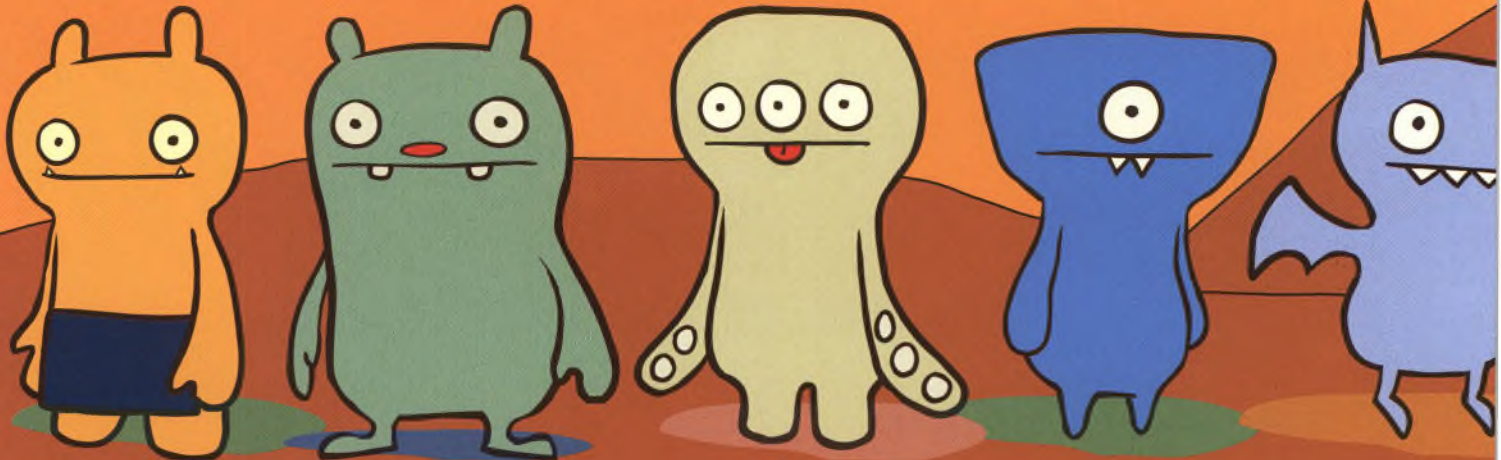
WAGE

JEERO

CINKO

WEDGEHEAD

ICE BA



ORIGINAL GANGSTERS

BABO

This stone-like, buck-toothed monster acts like your protective older brother... he's always got your back. He's a lover, not a thinker. Much like a child, Babo can't be left home alone. If you do, you'll probably come home to an empty liquor cabinet and a few missing sticks of butter. Oh yeah, he lives on cookies and money, too.

CINKO

From the depths of the sea comes Cinko... he had to leave because he can't swim. Always the silent joker, Cinko walks around sticking his tongue out at the world. Is your teacher bugging you again about how Babo ate your homework? Don't say anything. Just flash her your Cinko and she will get the point. He is also the younger sibling of Target and follows him around like a lost dog... or sea creature. And try not to make any "Hey 3 eyes!" jokes either. He is very sensitive.

ICE BAT

This is no ordinary bat. Ice Bat lives in an ice cave inside your icebox, of course. Much like the Cash Money Millionaires, anything he touches turns to ice. But he is so darn cute, you just want to squeeze the bling out of him. All Ice Bat wants to do is chill out with his cool new buddy - you!

JEERO

On the outside, Jeero he looks like one of the tougher Uglydolls, but don't be fooled. He is more like the Woody Allen of the gang - insecure, neurotic, and pretty dumb. His life revolves around hanging out on the couch and grubbing on some snacks. Not bad.

TARGET

The poster child for male pattern baldness amongst dolls, this hairy chinned character is the grandpa of the group. His age has brought him much wisdom, not to mention many arms and body hair. When a question needs to be answered, all of the Uglydolls turn to Target.

OX

Dude, I think that doll is winking at your girlfriend! He doesn't look like an ox. His name *means* OX - hugs and kisses, that is. Born with stubby little arms, he has to hug you with his droopy, elongated ears. So sad. OX will steal your heart... and anything else you leave out. Don't let that adorable face fool you. His friend Wedgehead says that stealing is wrong, but OX promises to give it back... in a few hundred years. Give him a hand, but don't give him any cash. You'll never see it again.

TRAY

Man, this is one goofy-looking doll. She has three lumps and three eyes, so she tells people he has three brains. Her brain is powered by an insatiable love for blueberry pie. She tries to use her massive brains to get Babo to do things for her, but, unfortunately he is too dumb to do them right. Oh Babo. Aside from the pie, just sitting next to you makes Tray happy.

WAGE

Sporting a little apron, it is easy to see that Wage is a real blue collar kind of ugly. He works at Super Mart, unbeknownst to the store owners. He just shows up. His best friend is the dim witted Babo, but he might forget and then you could be his best friend. Much like Babo, he is not too sharp and has been found talking to a fire hydrant. That underbite is just too endearing, and he will be working on your heart soon.

WEDGEHEAD

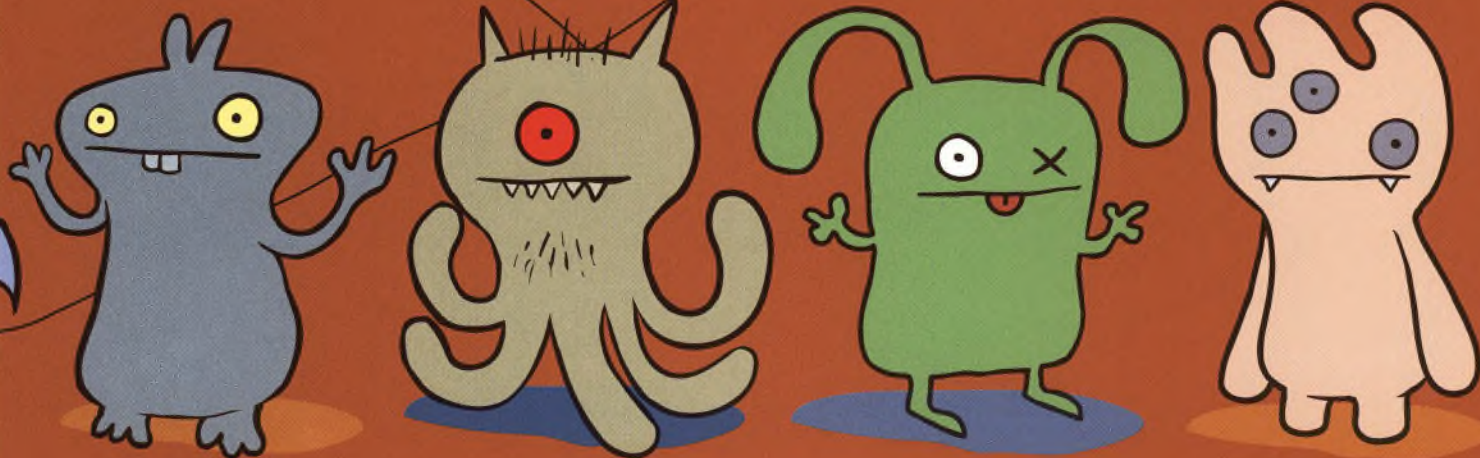
When he looks up at you with that one big eye, you just can help but know that he is looking right into your soul. He knows you. Born with an upside down, blue triangle-shaped head, Wedgehead and his friend OX are out to prove that "humans" exist. To help him with this scientific experiment, he will need snacks.

TARGET

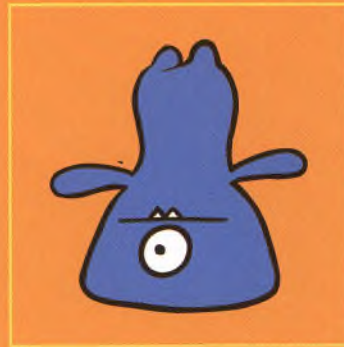
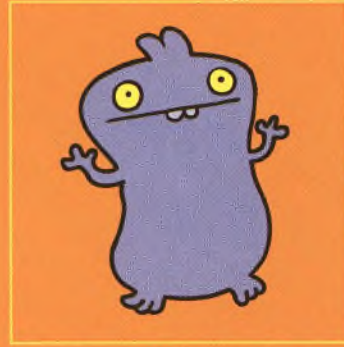
BABO

OX

TRAY



THE MANY STAGES OF UGLY



What kinds of toys did you play with growing up ?

David: My father would bring home metal toys made in Japan when I was very young. I grew up with Mazinga and Ultraman toys. Then Star Wars came out and the cool Japanese stuff gave way to Greedo, Walrus man, Hammerhead, and a land speeder with spring-loaded wheels.

Sun-Min: I didn't really have too many toys growing up but I did have some paper dolls. I liked playing with those. I spent most of my time running around outside.

Did you have Japanese toys or mostly American toys, any favorites ?

David: Sun-Min and I collect remake kaiju. Tim Biskup sent us a white Chibull (from Ultraman) as a gift. We had been looking for him for ages. He's on the top of our list for sure, but my favorite toys are the dolls Sun-Min makes, especially her Spider-Boom doll.

How did you meet Sun-Min and how did Ugly Dolls evolve? Who came up with the name?

David: Sun-Min and I met at the Parsons School of Design in 1997. I created the story of Noupa on the day we met, out of shyness. I was way too scared to go talk to her. I finally broke the ice by sitting in front of her in painting class and drawing a silly blob monster instead of the naked lady we were supposed to paint.

In 2001, Sun-Min had to move back to Korea. I was devastated, of course. I wrote letters to her all the time, and signed them with my little orange character Wage at the bottom. For Christmas, she sent back a plush version of him as a gift, which she had hand sewn for me. I was blown away. I had no idea she knew how to sew. Turns out she didn't, and this was her first try. Sun-Min called me the next day and said "I want to make an Ugly Doll." I took a look at the very first Wage she had just sent and said "I think you just did."

Did you think Ugly Dolls would become so well received?

David: We didn't think they would be received at all. The project moved from gift to art project when Eric Nakamura from Giant Robot asked for a few to sell in his shop. We were pretty sure those few dolls would sit on the store shelves for months. They sold in one day and we were quite horrified. We were hoping to send our pals down to Giant Robot to go look at them. So Sun-Min made a couple more. 1500 hand sewn dolls and 18

months later, Sun-Min's hands had changed colors a few times and we knew it was time to either quit or go into some sort of production.

Sun-Min: I was just excited and happy the dolls I was sewing were selling so quickly in these small shops like Zakka and Giant Robot. I wasn't thinking we would produce these like a real toy someday. The idea came up when I started to get pains from sewing too much. We're both very happy to see other people finding joy in these dolls. When small children write to us, it makes all of our hard work worth every minute.

What does the future hold for Ugly Dolls, David Horvath and Sun-Min Kim ?

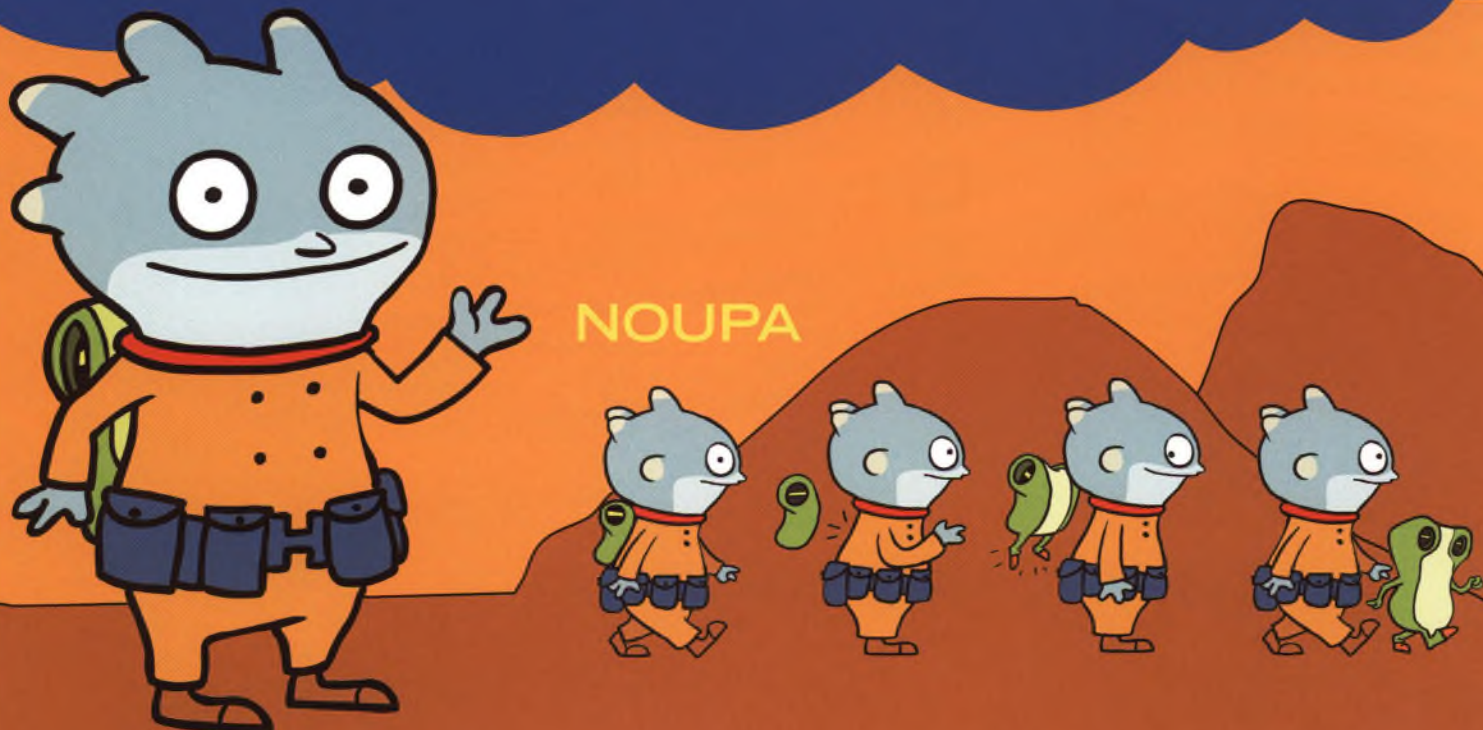
David: We're really excited about the work we have done with Critterbox, and we're all hard at work on the next bunch of Uglydoll toys with them. We just finished work on our newest Uglydoll plush and vinyl, Uglydog. As for other non-ugly toys and items, Sun-Min and I have been working night and day on our second collaboration together, Pounda- prints, toys, books, and some other fun goodies. We're also releasing a plush version of Sun-Min's Spider-Boom character. Plus a big step forward with Noupa in 2005 and 2006. Critterbox has been awarded the Noupa toy license and will be revealing some new toys from that line soon.

What's the toy culture like in Korea ? Are they mostly influenced by Japanese toys...or American?

David: There isn't much of a toy culture in Korea. There aren't any toy stores there! Or, if there are, we have never been able to find one. But the character world is booming in Seoul and we see plenty of influence from both Japan and the US. We did find one tiny shop selling Blythe down by Hong Ik University, and E-mart (Korea's version of Target) has a toy section with some Power Rangers, Legos, Barbie, and Gundam. There were a few tiny shops in Myung Dong selling mini figures and even some Panda Zs.

What's their response to Ugly Dolls?

D: We took photos of the Uglydolls in the busy streets of Myung Dong last year and the "tween" age girls freaked out over them. We're bringing Uglydoll to Korea this year in hopes of making everyone crazy with toy culture. A big apology ahead of time.



You have created the different worlds for Ugly Dolls, Noupa, Pounda and Little Bony, or is it just one world that they all live in?

David: They are all very different worlds. The only similarity maybe being you can tell who created them when you take a look around. The stories are so very different, and the characters all have their own voice and message, but you will be able to find a familiar vibe the same way you might be able to make the connection between Beetlejuice, Edward Scissor Hands, and the Nightmare before Christmas.

Do you ever see the characters interacting with each other? Would Wage and Noupa play checkers?

David: That would be a funny game. Noupa would try to convince Wage that the black & white pieces should work together. But unlike those freaky Superman-Spiderman team ups, these worlds could never collide.

Do you see a difference in the characters that the two of you create yourself individually as opposed to the characters that you create together?

David: So far I have been creating the visuals for Uglydoll, although Sun-Min's Uglydoll paintings surpass anything I have done by far, and we dream up the back-stories together. Spider-Boom is 100% Sun-Min and I have nothing to do with that. I'm crazy about Spider-Boom. She created the story when we first met at Parsons- a Spider who becomes pregnant when she eats cake. That's nuts.

Our second collaboration, Pounda, may be drawn in my style, but the storytelling came from hours of back and forth, very different from Uglydoll. Pounda inhabits a reality we may be more familiar with. I think folks will be able to tell the major differences in time as they become more familiar with each line.

Can you give us a little background on the robot "Super 7.5"? Something about him seems oddly familiar, yet I can't quite figure out what it is.

David: His big pearly white teeth? You were the first to pick up on that.

You have so many projects in the works! How do you find time for it all? Or have you drawn an army of helpers to finish the work for you?

David: We have an army of little helpers running around inside our minds for sure. Many of these projects have been in the works since the mid 90s. Littlebony and Noupa were ready to go by the time there was an opportunity to take them to the next level and much of Pounda's physical characteristics came from a now much delayed video game project. Still, it's 24-7 without a doubt. Eat, sleep, draw, repeat.

Is there anything else you would like to add? Any Shout-outs?

David: A big shout-out to anyone who has dreamed of bringing their work into the world for all to see and experience. It's a long, hard road, but worth every ounce of your energy. When we were getting started with Uglydoll in 2001, the head honcho of a major toy company tapped his finger on an early drawing of Wage and Babo and went on to tell us why these characters could never become toys. A few weeks later, we had the top dog of a major motion picture studio tell us the same thing. Worse actually. His eyes rolled as he explained this to us. Both contacted us a few years later wanting to work together. We're still not even sure if they remembered us from the first meeting.

Don't worry about what others say. If you're dying to create- be it a toy, a novel, or the world's best hammer, go for it. We need you to give it your best shot. The world is way too full of junk created for no other reason than to make money. It's time for something better. Don't worry about what's popular. Don't worry about what's selling well. Just bring out whatever it is that's lurking way deep down. I mean don't bring it to us, like to me personally. I mean just show us what you've got!

At the end of the day, does hugging an Uglydoll make you feel better?

David: They make me feel better for sure. Thanks to the Uglydolls, I was able to reunite with the only girl I ever really cared for. But will they really make you feel better?

Yes they will. And not just at the end of the day.

CHECK OUT:

www.davidhorvath.com / www.uglydolls.com





POUNDA



2005 IS LOOKING UGLY

UPCOMING PROJECTS FROM DAVID / SUN-MIN / UGLYDOLLS

- Sun-Min's Spider Boom plush (Critterbox booth, Toy Fair 2005)
- Spider-Boom circus punks
- Littlebony animated TV series 2nd season on NHK
- Littlebony capsule toy plush toys by Sony
- Littlebony toys, books and consumer products by Sony
- Littlebony licensed products (Licensing show 2005)
- New Uglydoll plush and keychains by Prettyugly LLC
- Uglydoll Coca Cola bottle cap figures by Coca Cola Japan
- Uglydoll vinyl figures by Critterbox including Uglydog
- All new Uglydoll toy line from Critterbox
- Uglydoll limited edition giclee prints
- Uglydoll tee shirts
- Uglydoll TV show
- 50 limited edition "Uglydoll-Biskup Yeti" plush hand sewn by Sun-Min
- Gama Go Noupa Calli by David
- Noupa collaboration with Camper shoes
- All new Noupa figures and vehicles from Critterbox
- Pounda vinyl by Critterbox (toy fair 2005)
- Pounda cell phone animations on NTT Docomo (Japan)
- Pounda picture book
- Pounda circus punks
- Pounda limited edition prints
- Horvath's 2-faced Dunny set 2 with secret Dunny by Sun-Min
- PSP/PS3 game with Sony Computer (title TBA)

二〇世紀未来 THE 20TH CENTURY FUTURE

ぼう えい たい

Written by Makoto Hayami
Character Designers Tadashi Mitudayama/Noriyoshi Ueno
Executive Producer Eiji Kamnaga

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ロボット防衛隊

THE TERRESTRIAL DEFENSE ROBOT SQUADRON TDRS



Recently, many accidents in the southern sea prompted the United Nation Forces to strengthen their patrols in the area. Three United Nation Air Force jets escorted the voyage of a large tanker, Pacific Frontier.

"This is UNAF-01 to PACIFIC FRONTIER, are you receiving me?" said the fighter pilot. "This is PACIFIC FRONTIER to UNAF-01, everything's under control." The pilot of jet UNAF-01 felt relieved but suddenly he was swallowed in fog. "That's strange," the pilot muttered. "This is UNAF-01, there is fog ahead. Please be careful!" In the dense fog, roaring sounds and strong vibrations rocked the tanker. "What's going on?" the captain of the tanker asked the engineer. "I'm not sure but something hit us, something very big!"

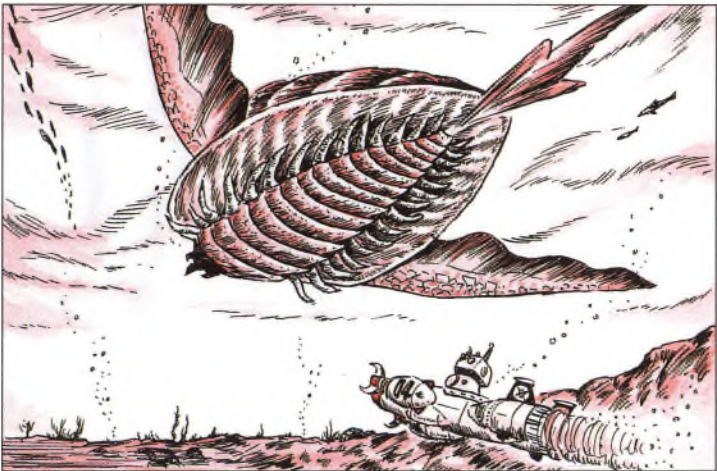
"Can you hear me? PACIFIC FRONTIER..." the jet pilot said, trepidation in his voice. The tanker exploded and a blast wave hit the jets. UNAF-02 and UNAF-03 crashed to the sea. UNAF-01 regained control and circled over the flaming tanker as it sank. A giant shadow appeared in the flames. The dark silhouette was shaped like enormous scissors. The pilot screamed for he could not believe what he saw. "May day, may day, time to call in the Tederos team!"

The TDRS-02 was the first vehicle to arrive. TDRS-05 landed on an uninhabited island in the area while TDRS-04 submerged in the water near the island. In the water, the driver of TDRS-04, Lisa saw a strange shadow. As it swam toward her, it took the shape of a gigantic lobster with



monstrous claws. The creature attacked the TDRS-04. "This is Lisa. To all units, a big monster has appeared!" The serrated claws of the sea creature swatted the TDRS-04. "Lisa! Are you OK?" Michael shouted over the radio. "I'm OK," Lisa replied, her voice strained and shaky. At TDRS Far East Base, Captain Smith and his crew were watching the screen in the operating room as the transmission from the TDRS-04 revealed images of the oceanic leviathan.

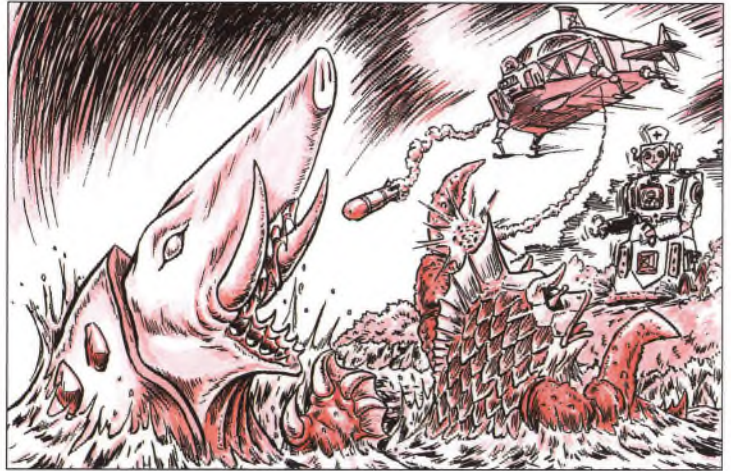
"This must be the cause of the recent accidents," murmured Sonny. "Lisa, attack the monster!" Captain Smith commanded. "I will try to lead the monster to the surface by firing missiles," replied Lisa. "Back me up. This is Michael. Roger, but be careful!" "Let's do it!" Lisa shouted, firing her missiles. The missiles impacted with the monster and it



fled towards the surface. "Michael! This is Lisa. The monster is surfacing." Suddenly, the TDRS-04 was struck by a second giant shadow. Lisa and her vehicle were flung to the bottom of the sea.

"Lisa, what's going on?" Michael called anxiously. But there was no reply. Captain Smith watched the image on the screen in the operation room. "TDRS-01 and 03 make a sortie!" he commanded.

In the operating room, Kury analyzed the monster with a computer. "Captain Smith! According to the images from the 04, the lobster monster is called EBIREON and inhabited the Earth during the Jurassic period. It was carnivorous and brutal. But why has it appeared now in the 20th century?"



Erika sat in the cockpit of the TDRS-05, desperately scanning the sea for signs of her team mate.

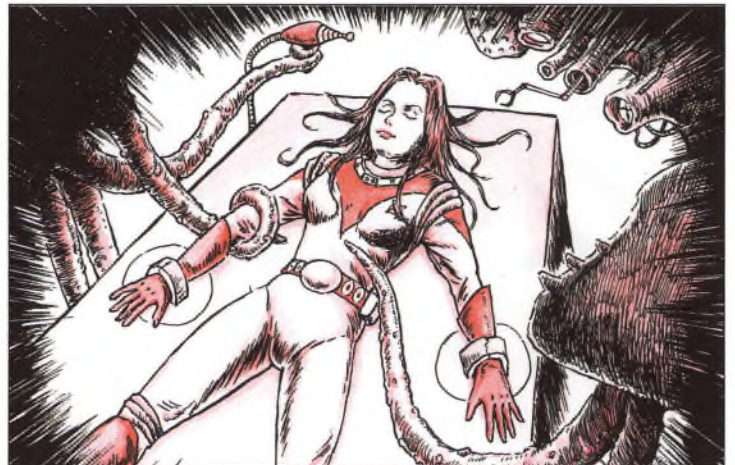
Lisa regained consciousness. She checked the vehicle's controls and confirmed everything was operational. The giant shadow congealed into a gargantuan fish with huge, membranous wings. Lisa's missiles struck the monster and it fled. "This is Lisa to Michael. A second monster has attacked me and I am now giving chase."

On the island, Erika watched as the ocean suddenly exploded and towering razor claws appeared above the waves. From the air, inside the TDRS-02, Michael watched in awe. "This is Michael, to Erika. I can handle it," barked Michael, firing his missiles. The sea erupted again and a second monster with enormous tusks bellowed in the churning waters. "What the heck is going on?" Michael said, firing missiles at this new enemy.

Lisa followed the giant hideous fish as it swam into an undersea cavern. "This is Lisa, to TDRS FE base. I've been chasing the monster and have entered an undersea cave." "This is Captain Smith, Roger. Be careful." Suddenly, the fish monster vanished. Lisa's vision was filled with a shower of sparks and she lost consciousness.

As if pulled along by an unseen force, her vehicle followed a mysterious light. Lisa awoke to find herself in bed, her hands and legs tied. Then she saw the octopus-headed alien.

To be continued in the next issue...



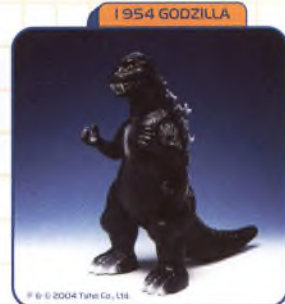
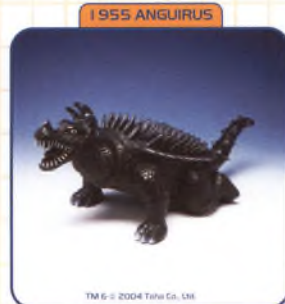
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Eric Joyner has always had an interest in the future and art. Having collected a few Japanese toy tins of robots, spacemen, and space ships from the 1950s and '60s, he eventually decided on bringing these robots and ships to life, as a theme for a series of paintings. In terms of artistic style, he is greatly influenced by the Brandywine and ashcan artists and illustrators of the early 1900s. Presently, his studio is in San Francisco where he creates illustrations for magazines and book covers, as well as concept boards and storyboards for local and national ad agencies. Over the years, he's been a teacher, created backgrounds for Internet cartoons, done texture mapping, and more recently, gallery work.

www.ericjoyner.com

Clockwise from top right: Fool Seascape, Robokong (detail), Hot Rod, Fantasy World, Metal Man, Change Man, Traveler, Conqueror





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ART BY BRAD ISDRAB



Botsky



Irata

For as long as he can remember, Brad isdrab has been working in whatever materials are available. With a bachelor's degree in fine art, he has made prototypes for Leapfrog toys and fabrication for other artists, including Mars-1 and Misk. His art and films have been featured in numerous exhibitions in San Francisco and along side other artists such as in The Culprit Research Project.

While his training is traditional, the aged look of his pieces is one of a kind. He describes himself as being in love with the processes of sculpting clay, casting resin, and that thing he does with scrap metal.

Brad isdrab is a maker of worlds. Each sculpture is a hint to something more, a part of the story. His worlds are old and full of imperfections, a broken fairytale, or a rusting futuristic society. He makes sculptures as characters in his stop motion films. In addition, he's making toys, each individually produced by hand.

Brad is constantly seeking out and working on new projects, toys, his comic, and films. Check out more of his work at Unethical Productions.

culpritresearchproject.com
unethicalproductions.com

ART BY LINDSEY KUHN



Lindsey Kuhn is a skateboarding madman responsible for some of today's best silk-screened rock posters. In 1991, his first gig poster was a New Year's Eve Green Jell-O/Tool show in Los Angeles. Kuhn's serigraphs have appeared all over America including Los Angeles' Jaberjaw, Emo's of Texas, New York's CBGB, and has since spread to venues worldwide. Kuhn's currently concentrating on original art and one-of-a-kind silk-screens. He has silk-screened posters on metal, giant canvasses, and huge ply wood surfaces, constantly looking for more challenging planes on which to print. He has numerous exhibits under his squeegee, including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as well as gallery shows in Europe and Japan. If you ask him what the future holds, Kuhn will probably tell you "only the grinding gods know for sure".

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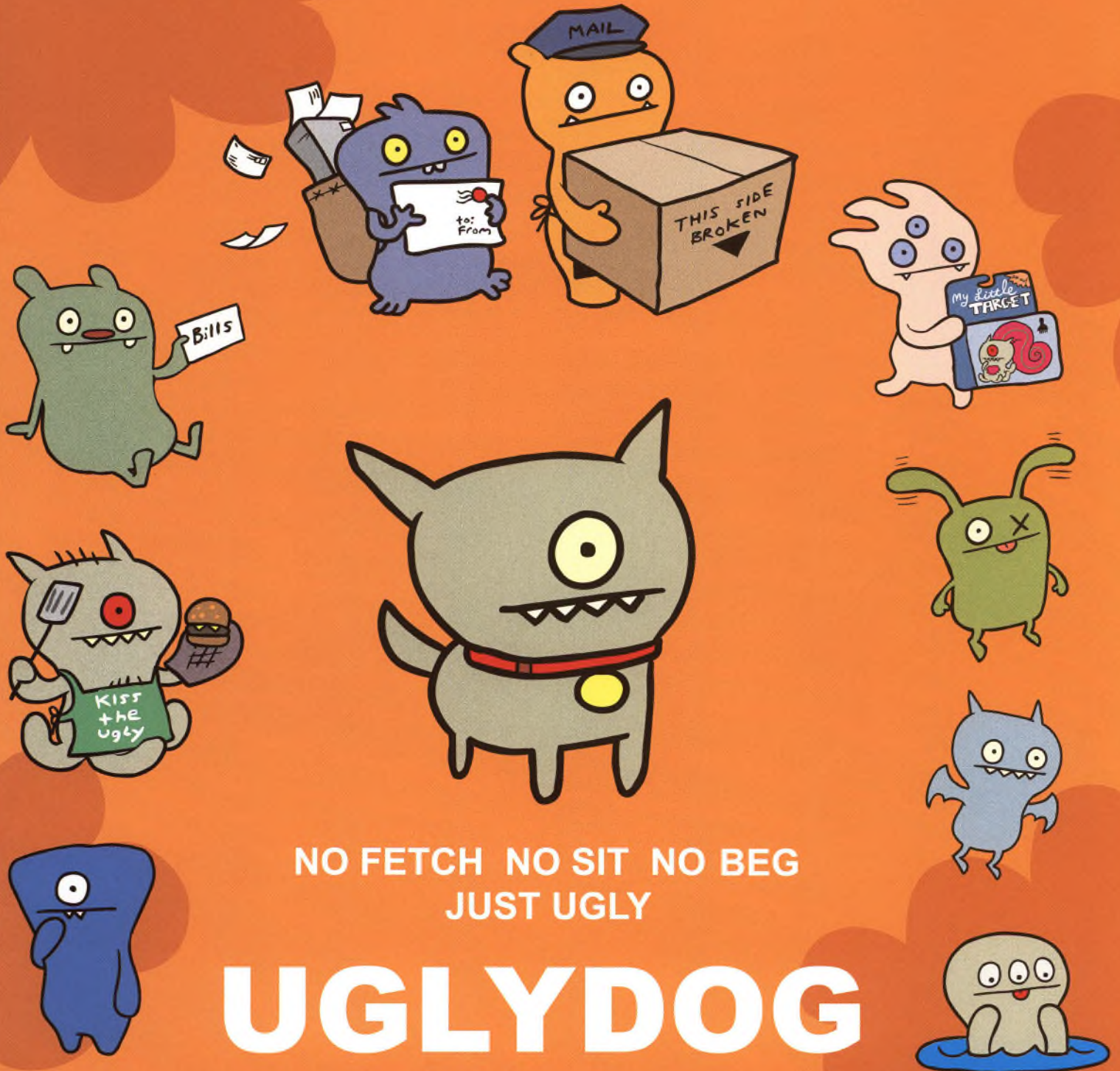
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