

Episode #97 – Richard Martin Audio transcript

So, what shall we talk about? There are so many things to talk about. The one that's on the top of my head is this beautiful Oh, bless you. this beautiful creature here. Reach behind me and bring this black wolf head that has been spectacularly flocked with varying lengths of black fur and flocking. [00:01:00] Yeah.

First time. That was the first time. Yeah. I hate your guts. Yeah. Of course. Yeah. It's gorgeous. There's a lot of procrastination beforehand. Of course. Yeah.

Techniques and Challenges in Flocking

Flocking is one of those things. It's, it really makes a big difference to some things. I remember them doing it on. Some bodies and saving private Ryan for the shaved heads of the bad guys.

It's so quick and easy. It looks good But it's not you don't see a lot of it. Really? I don't know. Maybe you do and you don't notice Well, that's the point, isn't it? If you notice it, then it's not very good, is it? But um, no, I like it Um, I think it's um, it's a really nice quick way of doing first. I've only ever done it with Really, really fine stuff.

You know, like kind of the stuff that they do dashboards. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. With it's, it's almost like, just like velvet fuzz, but this is like four, six, 10 millimeter lengths. Yeah. It's funny because the guys next door actually build vintage rally [00:02:00] cars. So I've actually flocked all their dashboards for them as well.a

Oh, nice. So, because they fabricate all the interiors and whatnot. So they keep coming in with these. Random pieces of folded metal. They're like, can you flock that for us? It's not a problem, but that's then when you use the half mil stuff and it comes off. It looks like, um, Looks like velvets. Yeah, it's ever so nice So obviously no, no.

Good. I, I don't know where to get longer fibers, uh, in the states without, you know, having to get it and cut it myself. Yeah. Which is maybe be able to, to, to message you with, with a supplier. That would be great. And then we could put that up with the notes. Yeah, because that's good. We got Minky, which is in Austria.

Yeah, that's what I got over. I bought one of those, I think back in 2008, right when I was over here for a show. Yeah. But, you know, I've seen people use, um, the little fly, it's the same concept that you can get for doing grass and you can do it for model railroad setups. [00:03:00] It's all the same stuff. I mean, there's, there's different types of, there's different materials, isn't it?

Flux made out of, or different types of plastic fibers, you know. Yeah. I've noticed some of them, they ball up better as well. The stuff that Titanic used to sell, I think that was the rayon stuff. And it balls up, which is, which if you're using it to add to silicon, you need to kind of sift it first.

Otherwise it kind of clumps together and it doesn't, it didn't, but it looks nicer as a flock, but just in silicon, it can be a bit tricky. Especially when you've, you've mixed it and you think it's fine. And then because you put your pigment in, it's relatively opaque and you don't notice until you. Pull the piece out and all of a sudden, it's got a giant red spot because it'll settle.

Yeah.

Silicone Pigmenting Insights

Well, one thing I've found a lot with flocking in pieces, I love putting flock in prosthetic pieces because it, you know, it gives you that diffusion in the pigment. It doesn't look like rubbery, you know, you get all your capillary colors in there and stuff, but you're right. Not so much as it sinks, but it can float to the top of the edge.

Yeah. So I found it where you've got a lovely [00:04:00] touchdown cat plastic edge, all of a sudden it's ruined because you've got all this blue, yellow, red and brown flocking, which is basically like someone's put a crayon around the outside. Yeah. Ruins it. Or if you've got vent, vent bleed holes, it can collect it.

Yeah, absolutely. Um, that's not good. You were the one that I'm, I've discussed this a number of times and I use it as an example when I'm talking about silicon pigmenting to students is I remember the age making did it. Uh, I think it was a prosthetics event, probably pre COVID. Yeah.

There's an old age.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, uh, I remember looking at it and there was something about it that I really struck me and you hadn't painted it yet. And I could see all the textures and you were like, it's because it's got a lot of pigment in it. And most people make their pieces too translucent. Light passes through.

And it's a really simple thing to point out, but it's the stuff that shows up your sculpt. Because a lot of people, I think, make their pieces too translucent. Then you don't see the sculpt. Then they overpaint trying to put back the forms that they have actually sculpted. And it sits on top, doesn't it?

Yeah. And it's not about the color. It's the density of the colors. How much [00:05:00] of that color is in it? Yeah. So it's not too waxy. Well, the thing is, I suppose if you make your piece too translucent, it's a bit of a cheat because it then blends into the skin easier because the color from the skin starts to show through the piece.

So therefore the transition from the piece to the skin is, um, Well, there's less of one. You know what I mean? It's a gradual thing. But no, if you make your piece more opaque, then yeah, the light can bounce off it, because skin's not really translucent, is it? It's just, it's a bit, but not that as much as most people make, it's, it's tiny.

It, it's not, it's, it's not see through. And you know, that's the problem. If you put all your texture into your skull, you should be able to see it the same way you can see skin, pos and wrinkles. Yeah. 'cause. You can see them therefore the light only passes through a little bit and your piece should be the same Yeah, and you've got that like you said it's that the people might hear that and go Oh, so there's a better chance of blending.

Why wouldn't I do that? It's like you're because it looks like dog shit Yeah, but that's away from the edge. Yeah, and it looks wrong when you paint it and also when you light it It will bounce off the skin in a way. It doesn't bounce off the piece abs. Absolutely. I mean, it's [00:06:00] robbing Peter to paper, isn't it?

All you're doing is you're making, is you just, you might fix one problem or one thing that you think you might struggle with, it might fix that. However, it opens you up to a different problem in a different area. So the trick is, is just get good doing it properly the first time and then. Yeah. That's that.

Stop being shit. Stop. Not stop being shit, but, but know where your shortcuts are, know where you can get away with stuff. And don't just go, Oh, if my piece is translucent, then I haven't got to paint it much or you're not going to see where. The skin starts and the piece finishes, just that's a different skill set, isn't it?

I think part of the part of the thought process, I think, well, if I make it more translucent, then more of the natural skin color is going to come through the piece. And yeah, yes. And, and, but, but, but no, but, but you have color right at the top of your skin, not two millimeters below it. Right. It's the same with clear bondo.

I don't see, I don't see the point clear bondo pieces. Yeah. [00:07:00] Your skin's not clear. No. And it's fine if you're dumping a load of color over the top. Or a load of blood and what not. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Or, you know, foundation. But again, you don't want that foundation thing.

Painting Prosthetics: Tips and Tricks

And that's something I've noticed a lot with, Students start painting skin, they go for like a natural one or two and they'll go with a lot of that to make it opaque.

And then the skin that's next to it that doesn't need colouring is different quality to the flat surface. The whole point of skin illustrators and other brands are available obviously is that you're not to paint a piece with them are you? You're supposed to But the color doesn't sound right, but it's not, it's not a paint job, is it?

Yeah, it's, it's, you're adding the color because, you know, your piece is going to be one shade throughout where our face or our armor or our chest, wherever it is you're putting it, isn't. It's, it's browner in areas. It's redder in areas. It's paler, it's darker and whatnot. And the, and the illustrators are there to punch those areas up.

It's not to. [00:08:00] It's not like painting foam. You don't need that much, or you shouldn't be putting that much paint down and whatnot. Oh God. I've had students borrow some in classes, use some of my palettes to paint stuff and I get it back and the fucking things are, where did it all go? Yeah. You've just got little red corners.

And everything's so painty. No, you don't use, don't make it opaque. No. No. I liked it. Keep my colors. I mean the lovely thing is there's two palettes out now. I say now they've been out a while now Which of my now absolute favorites to go to and those are the washes palettes from from illustrators Duncan Jarman's done a lovely one with amazing colors And also Bill Corso has done one as well called, um, character contour.

I think it's called that. I'll show you. It's there, but they're all taupe based colors and they're, they're really earthy. And, but, but that works for me particularly because again, I like to use. Very light [00:09:00] washes of color. I want my color to come through. That's the way it should be. You build up layers of things.

And that's the only way to paint foam is because it's opaque to begin with. And I always try, I'm not the best painter, don't get me wrong, there's people probably will listen to this and go, what's he on about? But, um, I also try and only paint darker colors. I don't like putting the light colors on the top because then I believe Because if you have to put a lighter color on the top, you have to make it opaque because otherwise you won't see the light color and therefore then that sits on the top and you end up with this gritty ish, especially if it's very dark skin to begin with.

It can look very, very surface y. Painted concretey type thing, but personally that's my Yeah. Well, you get that. I've noticed with silicon, well, silicon pigments and a lot of cream makeups is, uh,

illustrated not so much, but like the yellows, for example, you're doing much darker skin, you might lean to more of the yellow, but there's a lot of white in yellow pigments.

And so it ends up being very ashy, whereas [00:10:00] yellow flocking, you're not using your silicon. It's translucent. Or you need a translucent yellow, like the Copic inks, you know, you could use that. Yeah. And they're actually taken to silicon really, really well, to be fair. Um, but yeah, but, but again, turning back, that's one of the nice things about putting flock in silicon is that you get all that, that subtlety and that range of color in your pigment.

I mean, you, you take a piece out of a mold that's got, that's been flocked or pigments and regardless of the issues with rising to edges and stuff, you look at that and it looks like a piece of skin because it's got all that. Um, Blood underneath it and you've got the blues in there and you've got the melamine, I think that's the word for the browns and stuff, it's already there, it's already started.

So, if you can get a piece out that, that, where the flock's not, uh, floated to the edges and whatnot, your paint job's mainly there. Then you just need to, depending on where on the face it goes, if it is the face, add a bit of red, put a bit of shadow in, [00:11:00] jobs are good. Make sure the, the The sheen matches the skin, because that's the other thing that throws everything off, isn't it?

Yeah, it's a different quality. It's not just the color, it's the sheen. It's how the light bounces off it. Yeah. Which again goes full circle into why you've got to get the opacity right to start with. That was a good thing we noticed on the, uh, the Colonel Tom Parker makeup in Elvis that Mark did. And it was like, you saw it in so many different lights, outside, broad daylight, tight close ups.

On an actor we all know very well. very lingering. You can imagine the sort of, you know, the, the ass crunchingly fear of those closeups. A big part of it was noticing the sheen was spot on. It wasn't matte because it's a hot, greasy, sunny day. You know what I mean? So you've got to maintain that and it's a rip, and some of it's skin and some of it's.

Some of them might be a bit of filler, but they've all got the same sheen. And it's, it's something I noticed. It was like, Ooh, that's really nice. And it's a quality that is not to do with the color. Yeah. It's something you might consider afterwards. But that's why they're amazing. Cause that's like a mark [00:12:00] job with probably Josh doing it or God knows who else was applying it on there, but the top of their game, aren't they?

Yeah. There's a couple of products I've seen that do that. Luvate, Luwe Larsson makes the, uh, Luwe Shine, or Love Shine, I don't know how to pronounce it, but that's a nice kind of sheen. And people have been using Paw Paw, that red kind of. It's like a hand cream and it's sort of greasy, but not too much.

I've used it on high points as well, just to kind of catch the light sometimes. Yeah. Um, cause sometimes I will dry brush appliances with a bit of grease paint to, to, to pull up. You were saying about being wary of highlights. I like a little bit of that sometimes, but with something that's not going to interfere with the, the, uh, either packs or, um, illustrator.

Oh no, don't get me wrong. I do like highlight. I just don't like it in the illustrator. Sure. You've got to be very wary of them, I think. Yeah. You know, they can look a bit. Highlighting that. Yeah. Been applied rather than, that is the color of the skin. But no, I, I do like a bit of dry brushing with a bit of a fard cream as well.

Mm-hmm. That works quite well 'cause you can then fade it out and stuff and it sits quite nicely. I mean, Fard particularly is good at height and edges as well, I find. Yeah, a lot bigger.

3D Printing in Prosthetics

We've got [00:13:00] a lot of 3D prints around here. We're looking at these. We do. It's become a big part of workshops now. And I kind of feel bad about, we always bring it up, but it's unavoidable.

It's really changing everything. It is part of making prosthetics. Yeah. It's undeniable. Mm hmm. You can try to deny it, but you'd be wrong. Because it's, it's such a, I'm a 3d print denier conspiracy theory. It's one of those things using it wisely as well.

The Evolution of Scanning Technology

And uh, one thing we were talking about was the scanners thing.

And I think we both kind of realized that we have this thing where kind of like they were with cameras, they're trying to push for higher resolutions. Everyone's going, well, this has got a much higher resolution scan. You want a scan that's accurate, but you don't necessarily need a high resolution scan, or an endlessly increasing resolution scan, because it ends up being a huge file size, then you need a massive computer to do it, then it just slows the process down.

And ultimately, [00:14:00] so long as it's an accurate shape, the thing you are going to sculpt over the top, you're going to add the detail to anyway. Oh, absolutely. You don't necessarily need the poor texture on the inside of the piece. No, no. And at the end of the day, you know, it's just going to Well, as you say, you don't need the poor texture and equally as well, a smoother core is better.

You mentioned that you might want, it's okay to have some just to give you a sense of direction when you're sculpting. I mean, it gives you an idea for the, you know, some, depending on the age of the person will denote and you know, their lifestyle to know how heavy the poor texture is going to be. And depending on how good your scan is, you will get some of that and it can help you.

I mean, you'll obviously have your photo reference and whatnot, but it can also help you just just to know where to soften it off and where the poor texture goes and stuff like that, but you don't need Poor texture as it were you need to scan you need the map of where it's gonna be and stuff But anything beyond that?

Yeah, I mean, I'm superfluous, isn't it? I think so It's just from [00:15:00] people starting out who might be looking at scanners and printing The, the fact is you just don't need the best of it. You can get a pretty cheap scan. I'm thinking. You need accurate geometry, accurate landmarks of cheekbones and chin and eyes, eye orbits.

You need the anatomy. Yeah. And they're the correct scale, which is what these scanners do right. You know, they are the right scale. You don't have to do anything to it. They come out. It comes down, I think it comes down to getting the right scanner for the job, for what it needs to do for you. I mean, if, if what you're doing is.

Um, trying to recreate a perfect replica for, to, to then whatever, having online for artwork or to print off, then, then you need something for what we need. We need, as you say, something that's going to give us the correct geometry and maybe a hint of where the skin texture goes and various and whatnot.

And equally as well, the thing is, as we spoke earlier, I mean. The scanners that we're using, they're, they're, they're, they're bloody good. And you do get an [00:16:00] awful lot of information, but they're also easy to use. And I think they're easier to use because they don't get. Co op in trying to capture all the detail, all those little things that can stutter a scanner or help you lose tracking and things like that.

To get that detail, you've got to be so close. I mean, you're scanning, you're scanning, you know, like three square inches of the face. Yeah. And it's going to take fucking forever. Well, it takes forever. And also as well. But by taking forever, a face is never perfectly still. So you're going to move. So you run the risk of it losing tracking.

You run the risk of it scanning over itself. So then you get these little steps, these little grid patterns. And if you're trying to scan somebody to get all that detail and all of a sudden you've got this inaccurate pattern on there because the scanner stuttered or whatnot, you can't use it anyway.

Back to square one. So having the right level of detail that you need [00:17:00] for the job. It's great having a scanner that can do it seamlessly is better, you know, cause. And fast. Fast is better in this. If you don't have to keep going over the area, back and forth, back and forth, again, less chance for moving, less chance for breathing, less chance of their nostrils flaring, them slightly moving their head, their neck.

If you're trying to get an eyes open cast, you know, they're going to blink. You got the blink. It's longer than under the light as well. Yeah. And you've got, you've got the different kinds of light as well. I mean, it's nice to discuss this because again, if there are students who are like, maybe don't have a scanner that feel like they're getting way left behind and that everyone's got scanners and it's very, very complicated.

And it's like, it's good to say there are problems, not problems, but there are difficulties or things you have to contend with having bought a scanner that you don't learn about until you've got it. So, you know. My first scanner, I bought my first scanner years ago and it was a sense two and I bought it on eBay for 120.

And nobody knows what they are. But it was [00:18:00] one of the fir well, it weren't the first, because the first was the Sense 1, obviously. But, um, it was a little handheld scanner. It doesn't look that dissimilar. In fact, I've still got it in a drawer at home. And it was dead basic. And it was infrared only. And it was rubbish, don't get me wrong, but it was a toy, it was something to play with.

It was, 129 quid, um, but it opened your eyes to the, what the potential possibilities could be. 3D pens. Oh, absolutely. That you can draw a 3D sculpture. Yeah. It's, that's crap too, but you can use them for other purposes to help blend. We were just talking about this with Sandy. Great at welding 3D prints together.

Yeah, for welding prints together. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. But, you know, it, it, it started in, if I was a student, if I was practicing, I gotta be honest with you, I could get a decent enough scan out of that to make a prosthetic. Cause it would just soften everything anyway. Yeah. You know, you'd be a bit bugged around the eyes and stuff, but, and the corners of the nose and it's not gonna work out.

So it'll pay for itself. Yeah, exactly. And then, you know, [00:19:00] it's only, it's only the last couple of years that I've actually invested in the bigger, more professional machines. Cause I'm now finding a use for it. It's, It's a toy, don't get me wrong, but it's a toy that I can see has practical benefits. I could, I've integrated it into my workflow.

Life Casting vs. Scanning

I mean, personally, I don't like life casting. Never have. I can do it. I've done it. Don't enjoy it. Well, I don't think anybody really does. It's, it's time consuming. It's messy. It's, it's, uh, potentially dangerous. Could be uncomfortable for, you know, I have, I've had. Uh, repeat customers who I've done casts for different things that will fall asleep, but for some people it's a little unnerving for them.

And the thing when you do live cast somebody and who does struggle with it and they do find it unnerving, it shows in the cast, you know, doesn't give you, I mean, and that's another thing why I love about scanning is one, I don't have to live cast anymore. [00:20:00] It's less messy. It's quicker. You show up with like, not a, not a fucking, a trolley full of gear.

Yeah. I mean, a mess. Five, 500 pounds of material. Yeah, I did that. Yeah, and three assistants. When we did the second season of Gangs of London, we set up a room down at production in Holborn to do live casting. And it, it's an office. So I had to plastic everything, take all my, you know, keep it big stock of materials down there and whatnot.

Have people down there for a good couple of hours. I'd be there a couple of hours. Cause you know, you'd have to set up in the morning, they'd come in, you'd have to run your cast. You'd have to clean them up. You'd have to clean the room up and whatnot. It was a pain in the backside. Whereas I've just done a job recently where we had eight actors to scan.

Took me two hours. They just all turned up in and out the door 10 minutes job done. Thank you very much No mess, and that has a cost, you know that rolls of plastic are not cheap and no physical footprint for it It was no physical [00:21:00] footprint. Absolutely plaster footprints. I But again, we were in somebody else's space.

Yeah, so it's important to leave it the way you find it Yeah, to be honest, and it was I turned up with a bag and my scanner. I didn't need any any help You know, it was, you could do it the day before, didn't have to worry about if I'd had this in stock or if this has expired, or if I had, you know, all the consumables that you'd need.

As long as I've got a charged battery on my laptop and all my cables, good to go, good to go. And for me, I find that beneficial. Yeah, yeah, of course. And that's why it's inevitable that this is going to increasingly become part of how we do things. And in the past. We would have done life cast because it wasn't the only way of doing it.

Of course. So we put up with all the distortions and the worries and the nose bruises because we didn't have a choice. And we do what we can to mitigate it. But then when something comes along that's better, it's inevitable it's going to get replaced as a system and the easier it becomes. Inevitable step in the evolution.

We started [00:22:00] out with the algae, I guess originally they just slather plaster directly on the face. Yeah. And then it was alginate.

But the thing is as well, you say it's the inevitable thing. I don't think that's a bad thing. No, no. Because you do see some people go, Oh, you know, we're losing the tradition and that's all good. But it's only tradition because there was no better way to do it. It was a time where it didn't exist either.

Well, exactly. Something always supersedes the previous thing, doesn't it? And so, yes, there's a mass, massive, uh, upfront cost because even when you've got your scanner, it's no good to you unless you can print what you physically scan. So you've got that as well. And then of course you need a computer that can run it and whatnot.

And there's a learning curve. But that's our job anyway, isn't it? We always have to learn how to do these things. And before you do learn how to do them, you can't. And it seems difficult, but it's just one of those things. It is a tool to be used. It is here. It is beneficial. [00:23:00] Why not use it? It's not, I don't think it's a problem.

Yeah. Especially if you're integrating into your existing workflow, because it just becomes, you're going to sculpt something maybe traditionally or digitally or whatever, but you can do, you can choose either because you know both. Yeah. Absolutely. Right tool for the right job. And you know, you can work that out on your time as well.

I mean, your, your schedule can often denote which way to go. It's not brain surgery. It's, it's. It's not that difficult to learn. I'm, I'm, I'm pretty much a Luddite. You know, I'm not, I hate computers. Yeah. I hate them. But you know, I know how to use them well enough to do what I need to do. I love ZBrush.

Yeah. I love scanning. I love being able to do all of this stuff and I don't miss. The, the life casting with silicone or alginate. You got all sorts of democratizing qualities about it as well. Like for example, can you imagine doing a scan and then sending that scan to someone like Sebastian to block out and then Jermaine or, [00:24:00] it's just the fact that you can share objects essentially that we produce as a physical object without posting anything.

Absolutely. So you can fragment the job around the world. You can fragment the job around the world. And think of also as well, the carbon footprint that creates if it was to be done physically. Yeah. Yeah. Well, we did that. The last time I did something like that was a Neil Morrow. We did the Normski makeup in 2019, ship the life cast.

I the life cast. And then I sent the life cast in and then he sculpted on it. I molded it before I sent it. Then he sculpted it and sent the sculpted pieces back on a foam head. You know, and it was back and forth just to try it out. It's just like, that'll be, it's not that it's unthinkable, but it's, it's because the cost of, of posting things and, and shipping and fuel has gone up so much.

Like for example, my heating, you know, I look at my accounts, I was doing my accounts a couple of weeks back and I remember how much it used to be like 50, 60 quid a month. Yeah. Standing charge for it. It's gone up. It's, it's more like 500 a month now. It's gone up 10 times. [00:25:00] So the electric in this place has gone silly.

It's crazy. And so because of that stuff like posting stuff, well the fuel, the HL, whatever, it's all gone up. So it's a consideration when. Electrical devices are coming down in price. Yeah. Yeah. and, and think of the time as well. Your time has a as a value as well, doesn't it? Yes. So, you know, if something's gonna spend, depending on when you send, someone's gonna spend a week in the post.

That's a week. Nothing's happening. Yeah. And it might get lost or held customs or damaged. Gmail has become part of the workflow. Yeah, it has. Yeah. And it makes it, it makes it. But the thing is, like you say, to use it where you need to. And then when you need it to be practical, then you become practical.

But it's not the emperor's new clothes. It, you know, it, it doesn't fit every bill and it doesn't fit everybody's ethos and workflow, but it's, it's all to be used if you, yeah, of course it is. Of course it is. And you know, these tools get more advanced in each day and. There's stuff that, I mean, let's be honest, [00:26:00] our industry is born from stealing stuff from other industries.

Yeah. So this is just another one of those. This is the latest in a long line. That's a really good point. The amount of times when I'm learning, like, I don't know, when I bought my scanner, I watched videos and you see that the training videos from MindScan and, you know, how they are shining, whatever it's called, you know, you show something and it's, it's some.

You know, it's some engineer guy showing you and it's, it's not a well made video, he's not using a microphone, you know, and it's really clunky, but you really understand how it works, but you realize that people in other industries have been doing stuff like this for years. Yeah. Reverse engineering. And, and it's just fallen in our lap and we're like, Ooh, how was it done?

It's like, Oh, it's doable. But then, you know, we noticed when you got your, um, the, the spider scan, you know, and there was like the word. Uh, texture, which means color. Yeah. No, but again, but that's like, but that's a good thing to know. And I, I had no idea. I thought to me, texture is microscopically small forms.

It's not color, [00:27:00] but it is in the digital world. Okay. So. That means, and then you kind least, or at least in the scanner world. Yeah. Because in in the 3D printing world, you know, the

X, y, and Z axes are different than they are in Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. In the, the digital sculpting and in visual effects world where where it X is side to side, Y is up and down, and Z is depth.

Right. It's why when you do a scan and you load it into ZBrush, it's never the same way you scan it. No, no. It's always like. He looks drunk. That's a good point. I thought it was just me that happens to. No, no, no. It's a different axis and I don't know why. It doesn't make sense to me. It's a different language maybe.

Have you tried with the ZBrush on iPad yet? Have you got an iPad? No. No. No Apple products in my house. Now, um, um, It's the only Apple product in my house, because no one did an iPad. You see, [00:28:00] I, I, I, I've been tickling with ZBrush for years, and it's only recently that I've got into it properly. You know, I've had a copy of it for a while, and I, I first bought a Microsoft Surface Pro specifically for it, because it was iPad size, but it, you could, it's a PC, so you can run programs on it.

And, um, you know, I stick Photoshop on it, I stick a ZBrush on it and whatnot. And, um, Yeah. So that's what it, it wasn't the best computer. Um, it was quite small, so it would crash and it wasn't really that useful, but, um, that was it. So, but now, um, good old gaming laptop. Cause it would feel like going backwards cause I've still got my Microsoft Surface Pro if I needed to do little stuff and I can't imagine it's the full program.

I might be wrong. Not for me. I've got my laptop. I'm happy. Yeah. Gaming laptops, way to go. Cause it's the high spec you need for the 3d stuff, unfortunately. [00:29:00]

AI in Prosthetics and Beyond

And then there's, then there's AI, I don't know if we want to talk about that elephant in the room. I don't know if any of us can imagine what that will really mean.

I think in terms of being able to help with, with production workflow and you know, things like that. I don't, it's, I don't think it's going to take anybody's job away. It's it's again, it's a tool, isn't it? I mean, it can be quite scary and inevitably with anything that's new, it's going to get abused.

Isn't it? It's going to have its boundaries pushed to see what it can and can't do. And I think after a while, I think people will realize that, um, actually this is the best way of doing it. This is the best way of doing it. But as a tool, if it can help you, yeah, I think it helps got to be a good thing.

That's the thing. If it's a tool. See, I think the trouble with a lot of AI stuff. I think is in, in the longer span of time, it basically removes the journey. So mid journey being called mid journey is quite fun, [00:30:00] but basically if you, if you give it some prompts and it can spit out something that's cool, you haven't enjoyed making it.

Well, the thing is you've not enjoyed it. No one wants to pay for that because they'll, even if it's not true, they'll imagine that it was easy for you. Yeah. Whereas if they've watched A Sculpt to Sculpt, they can see that there's some skill involved. Yeah. Well, the thing is, mid journey particularly, if you, if you, Depending on what you want to use it for, if you're using it just to create art, well, it's making pretty Yeah, I think that's, that's, that's a cheat and no bueno, um, but as an idea generator?

As an idea generator, absolutely. I agree. I think it has great value there. Because, yeah, because it's not just you using your imagination. It's all stolen from other people. Don't get me wrong. Well, it's drawing from literally everything that is on the internet. Yeah. But the thing is, let, let's say you, you used it to create a concept, which you then presented to a director and they said, that's great, but can we change it a little bit?

You can't, can you? [00:31:00] Cause you couldn't then go back into it and say, okay. Can I have this image, but a little bit changed and the computer is going to interpret it, how it sees it, isn't it? I think it's, I think it's moving in that direction. Yeah. Now, with, with, um, being able to, you know, Stuart and I were talking about taking pictures that we took of each other and having AI create, you know, some, another vision of us using those pictures, making it still us, so we could have, have a conversation with each other.

So you can. Input that original design and it will use that image and, and tweak it just a little bit. The midjourney can't do it yet. Yeah. You, you load that image in and you tell it, I want to change just this. It will give you something completely different. That's what I mean. Yeah. But I think, I mean, that's the only one I've had a look at, but I think it's heading in, in the right direction.

Oh, and inevitably it'll all come out eventually, wouldn't it? I mean, the, the latest version of Photoshop, I think is, you can do some crazy AI stuff on that. Well, there's, there's, there's topaz. [00:32:00] AI, AI photo and video where you can go in and take a, take a really shitty photograph that you know, it's out of focus and that's like 90 percent of my first.

It's insane. Yeah. How it, how it can clean it up. You go, Oh my God, that's, it's amazing. It's weird though. Cause, but, but it also seems like a kind of self defeating thing because that would make. App companies, a lot of money quickly, but then after a time that what that app can do will cease to be impressive to anyone because we'll just assume it will be able to, it kind of not my problem.

No, no. But the only people that benefit seem to be the, the, the AI companies as, as some, like if you, for example, if you were to, if you were to show someone. Um, morphing on, on the movie, no one's going to put their dinner down and go, Oh my God, I need to call someone. I've seen something on TV that stops.

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That did happen when you saw Jurassic park. Yeah. That doesn't happen now. No. So it's desensitized, aren't we? Cause it's normal. Yeah. [00:33:00] So I think what will become impressive is not your ability to produce me singing with Adele. Yeah, because we'll assume, of course, there's an app that can do it. I'll make that video.

I'll put it up. No one will care because they're too busy making their own. So it's kind of like, what is it that's hard to do? Still is what we are impressed by, you know, rather than what, what it's not. It's not the finished thing. It's what it took to get there. It's, it's the journey, not the finish line.

The analogy is we were all drunk. We were talking to that guy across the table from us. I can't remember his name, that artist guy with his daughter, Dan. Uh, I said the analogy I was saying, it's like if you've got a human being, two human beings and one is going to run 50 miles and to get to a destination, another person gets in a car and drives to that destination.

So they both traveled from one place to another. One did it much quicker in the car. The other one did it using just their legs. No one's impressed with the guy that got there by the car, but there is something quite impressive about the guy that ran. And also, he has all these health benefits too, that his body is in such good condition that when he's not running, his heart rate is very low.

He's got good blood pressure. He's going to [00:34:00] be healthy, probably live longer, right? So it's not about the abilities from get one place to the other. It's that it's the manner in which you arrived at that place and it's hard work and the grueling self discipline and blah, blah, blah. But the point is you benefit from being able to do that.

So it's the ability to do something hard, which is. The value in it is the ability to do it. It's not just getting the end result with no effort. And I think that's what the AI is promising. And that's what people are using. And a lot of greedy people in positions where they can have apps might produce something that will get thousands of people to give them money so that they can be fucking lazy and appear skilled for a bit until that becomes boring.

It is. But that doesn't really help you. And that's the point. No one cares about things you did 10 years. Like, do you remember the four pictures of, of me and different genders? You know, you had your photo. If you did that now, no one would give a fuck. But for a week, it's amazing. They would applaud you for being so brave.

Yeah, and then the first thing they would do is get the app themselves, and then them do it, and it spreads like a virus. It doesn't really change anything. But it's kind of like teaching or learning as well. It's [00:35:00] not the why you do something. Sorry, it's not the how you do something, it's the why you do it.

So I suppose in that, it's very, very similar. I mean, if you're only ever interested in how to do something for a quick fix. As it were, how do I do this? Then you've missed the point and you've missed the ability to actually take the skill that you've acquired and or to understand how you got there. You can't differentiate.

You can't use it in any other environment. You can't change it in any way because you don't know what you needed to know to get there. You just went, you would results driven, isn't it? Yes. Well, that's the paradox. That's the conundrum because, you know. in, in learn to learn something, you've gotta push yourself outside of your comfort zone.

Of course you do. And, and work. And I think if the work's being done for you with, with ai, you're never getting outside of your comfort zone. No. Mm-hmm . Too cozy.

The Illusion of Progress

Yeah. And you may think you're outside of your comfort zone. You may think you're, you're progressing. But it's, it's, it's really not. [00:36:00] Well, it's the same as it, it, it, everything's going great.

When it's going great and there's no pressure, there's no. Testing of you, but it's, it's, I suppose it's how you, if you understand the ins and outs of it, if you've gone on your journey and whatnot, when this stuff, when the shit hits the fan, as it were, it doesn't cripple you because you've got the experience and the knowledge and the grounding behind you to work stuff out.

And I suppose, as you say, if we just go in straight for the easy results and whatnot. Of life's gonna trip you up. Eventually there's gonna be a situation that comes up, which you are not prepared for, and you've got no way to get out of this. Yeah. 'cause it difficult with that if you've, if you've been training properly, if you've got your foundation, you can find the way out of that.

Yeah. And not curl up in a ball and cry under the table. Yeah.

Self-Sufficiency and Modern Life

'cause we've sort of reached that way in a bit in the society where there's so many things that happened that we, we don't, we are not personally involved. The analogy I like is Amish people, right? I know I have the beard. But like, they're, they, they are involved in every part of their [00:37:00] life.

So if they eat food, it's because they grew it, and they, they farmed it, and they killed it, and they processed it. If they have a house, it's because they built it, you know. If someone dies, they all know what to do, you know. And it's a simple life, it's a much reduced simpler life, but the point is they're involved in everything.

In this country, we had a horse meat scandal about ten years ago, where we were getting meatballs that were processed, and it turns out that it wasn't. Um, because it was a cheaper meat and wasn't already available and everyone was outraged about it. And it's like, yeah, but the, the chain between my plate and the field is so long and I don't see any of it.

And I, I couldn't tell you how any of it happens, but I depend on, I expect there to be fucking meatballs every time we go shopping. So you end up being so distanced from the reality of your world that there's, there's plenty of room for corruption to creep in and it's good when you're sculpting or whatever.

You need to know how to do these things. The danger is you end up. Uh, thinking you can just wholesale, do everything outside. And then what you say when something goes wrong, there's a power cut or suddenly if your favorite sculptor doesn't want to work for you anymore or whatever, suddenly it's down on to you.

What [00:38:00] can you actually do yourself? Which is why the one man band thing is good to slowly grow and expand rather than just think, Oh, it's just, you know, you've completely put me off of meatballs. What's wrong with horse? It's a leaner, more nutritious meat. It's a bit gluey. Both things are a bit gluey. But the breadcrumb sticks really well.

But yeah, it's just, uh, I mean, that's all sorted out. But there's, there must be a million things like that. I don't know how to make my shoes, but I expect my shoes. Do you know what I mean? There's so many things I depend on that I have no idea how they're made. Print yourself a pair of shoes. Yeah. But then, you know, there's, there's a mechanism involved in all of that.

How does the electricity get to your house? It's this, it's a big, everything, we all depend on these finely tuned things. And if they're slightly fucked, everyone goes mental because they got their, their internet's down for half an hour. They can't function. It's like, well, you build a fucking network then.

Climb up some trees and hubcaps and build a satellite and try and make it work yourself. It's not easy, you know, but we all depend on these things. And so I think it behoves all [00:39:00] of us to. Try and expand ourselves and not just rely on things to make life easier. This has gone around a big fucking circle, but you know, Self sufficiency.

Yeah, a little bit of self sufficiency because I think it's good to do things yourself. Or at least know about it or be aware of it. Yeah. So you can kind of be involved in the process because, yeah. The idea of just someone, you know, punching a bunch of, um, Being like a prompt. Imagine. I'm sure there are people that would say that, you know, that's a hard job, but You know, those people would be wrong, but you know, I'm sure, I'm sure I don't know.

Making pizzas is hard. It's not as hard as mining or, you know, building a ship without power tools 400 years ago or whatever, you know, with your massively reduced lifespan, you get used to whatever is around you because you forget that there's another world and another time you're like this. Um, I think that's what's, what's nice.

The Digital vs. Traditional Debate

I, I've enjoyed the fact that with the digital stuff, whenever I do stunt stuff on ZBrush or print stuff, I really notice how much time it [00:40:00] saved me. Yeah. How much quicker it was. 'cause I know how it would've taken me to do traditionally. You know, the other side of it though, that, that, that's, that's it. You know the journey.

I do. But I worry that things would become so complex that there'll be people that won't necessarily learn how to sculpt in clay. Because they don't need to, because they came into a world where ZBrush already existed. So why bother doing things in clay? I did stuff in clay because I didn't have a choice.

Because there wasn't a ZBrush for me when I started 30 years ago. There's a nice thing about working in clay though, isn't there? And there's a convenience thing about working in pixels. I mean, it's wonderful to be able to go home at the end of the day. And you don't check clay all over the house. And you know, sit at home on my sofa with a cup of coffee.

Especially when, you know, right now it's snowing, it's cold outside and stuff. Enjoy that. That's fine. However it doesn't fit to me. It doesn't feel like sculpting. I get I take pleasure out of sculpting. It's cathartic. It's therapy it's you know, it's my mental well being to sit down and lose myself for eight hours at least And I could just look at something just just push clay around that to me I will never not do that [00:41:00] because this isn't a case of um, A job or whatnot, this is a lifestyle.

This is, this is a part of who I am. This is a part of what I do and, and, you know, what, what I do to relax myself and keep myself mentally, uh, healthy and whatnot. So. Zbrush is great, but no, I'm, I wouldn't give up clay. But that's it. Cause you like sculpting. It's not that I need a sculpt to exist.

There you go.

Yes. I want to make a sculpt. Kind of like dinner. Can you imagine a world where someone just puts an injection in you and gives you all your nutrition so you don't get to eat a Sunday roast anymore because now we can just, I would hate that. I like eating. It's not an inconvenience. No, no, no. But this is what you take pleasure from.

I mean, you know, we do this as a job. So yet the end result is a commercial output. You know, we have to make something. And a lot of the time we're constrained by budget and time and it's a case of getting the job done. But, um, to enjoy your job, enjoy that job. Yeah. Even the option, given the choice, I will integrate digital stuff into my workflow, but my workflow is very [00:42:00] firmly set.

Using my hands and, and using real play whenever I can. However, if I've got to get something out by tomorrow, it'll be done digitally because it's quicker. It is. Yeah. It's means to an end. Doing it all. And then yeah, picking and choosing what's necessary. Yeah. Unless you know it. I'm not saying I know it all, but unless you have that grounding, you're educated to make the decision about what works best for you in this particular instance.

Sure. And knowing all the factors, you know, the factors being time, budget, requirements and et cetera. Otherwise fast, cheap. Yeah. I only get two. No, it's good to be well rounded and trained up. Otherwise, like you say, you're, you're, you're, you're a hammer looking for nails because that's what you know. And it's like, not everything's a nail, you know?

Well, you can only react to situations, can't you, rather than see them coming.

Efficient Workflows in Sculpting

So on that, when, with, um, with Jackal, how much, how much of that was, was digital? That was as much digital, well, that was [00:43:00] as digital as it was practically practical to do it digitally. I mean, the lovely thing about that, that, um, I was able to sort of experiment a little bit because it's a new work.

It was a new workflows to me and I wanted to integrate as much digital as I could. And the lovely thing is, um. I just, I bought my scanner for that job because I thought, you know, I'll start and we'll see. And it was a bit of a twitchy bum thing because I had no idea if the scaling could be 100 percent until we stuck the first makeup on.

I was like, oh dear, his nose is massive. As in, that was, his nose isn't massive, but It could have scaled itself incorrectly. It could have, and I wouldn't have known until I tried to stick it on. Um Um, but no, again, it was going to be, it's a makeup. So I wanted to do the makeup practically because my skill set isn't there digitally to create something confidently.

And obviously, you know, it was a big thing. You had to be on screen on certain time, but the background side of things. I wanted to [00:44:00] integrate as much digital as I could and it just so happens that my good friend Adam, Adam Edwards, he was traveling around Australia in a bus. He'd taken a year round, he was going to go exploring and he's the most amazing digital Zbrush extraordinaire that I know.

So the lovely thing was is I could scan Eddie, I'd have a conversation with Adam in Australia. Tell him what I wanted in the first instance to clean the scans up and then I could email them to him. I'd go to bed, I'd get up in the morning and he'd done it. It was brilliant. And then I'd print the head.

Now that to me was a fantastically efficient use of everybody's time. And it mean that yes, whilst granted, you know, if I live cast him, then I would have a plasterhead out the same day. Still got

to clean it up, still got to mold it before I can start sculpting. What this meant was I could have a kip. Get up the next day, put my printer on, and I got a perfectly mold ready head.

It was crazy. It was brilliant. And you're not going to give yourself a hernia carrying it across the shop? I'm not going to give myself a hernia. Um, it was, [00:45:00] and you know what? It was a beautiful thing. I mean, as, as, as, as nice as you can clean a live scan up, the digital, it was beautiful. It was amusing. You know what?

It looked that good. Just as a live cast, Eddie saw it and he wanted, he liked, he saw it as a benefit because his character was a prosthetics design artist himself. He wanted one to put in his. No, he wanted one to put in his lair because to look at it, it was visually an appealing thing, which was wonderful.

Whereas a live cast, just a little bit shitter, but this was, um, turned into a, a, a center point in the, in the show, which was lovely. Yeah. It was, it was great. It's cool. Now, the other thing we were able to use or to me, uh, was fantastic as a digital output was, um, In the first scene, we see him in his disguise makeup, and he rocks around in this little shitty old apartment, [00:46:00] and he faces off against the guy he's killed.

He's impersonating. So of course we needed a dummy, we needed a double. So what we did is we did, we did a test makeup on him in London. We knew we had a conversation before with props and whatnot, and we knew what type of chair the guy was going to be laying when he's dead. So we got the similar type of chair.

So we put Eddie in his test makeup before we put his wig on, before we put any of the facial hair in. We sat him in the chair with the director there and said, what pose do you want him in? And then we scanned him in that pose with his makeup on. Then I also scanned him upright. So we had, cause of course he's lying in this chair.

So of course he's lying on the back of his head. It's lying on his ear and we can't get underneath. So we lose a bit of detail on his face. We lose some area there. So the scan wasn't complete. So I scanned him. You know, just upright 360 again, send that over to Adam [00:47:00] in the evening, he was able to then take the whole scan from just Eddie, you know, in a prime position, take the bits that we missed when he sat down dead in the chair, morph them together, tidy them up.

And then the next day I had a full bust. It's ready to go, which I could then print it's off the full head. He put the ear in, sculpted the bottom side of the cheek and whatnot, made a lovely, lovely job of putting a little tongue and teeth in there as well with a little key. So you could just print those off and pop them straight in.

Molded the head, quick clay pour to put some nice detail in it. Done. Fantastic. Absolutely amazing. Keyed it in so we could fit into the body. Couldn't be better. And this was all done. 24 hours a day because of the time difference, I do my job in the day, send it off to Adam, go to bed. He'd do his bit, send it to me.

And it was just, it was like a tag team. He was like a relay race and it just made things [00:48:00] fantastically efficient. And it also meant as well that between the two of us, we got pretty much the whole job done. And then of course I got a lovely mold maker and Tim Quinton came in to help physically put it all together, but we made a whole body basically with.

Two of us in a digital magician, but no, he was fantastic. I tell you as well, I tell you as well, whereas the other, the other side of it, the other digital side of it was because we had, I forgot about this, because we had a digital copy of Eddie Redmayne's head, I could do digital concepts. And it was very easy because we didn't really know how far we wanted to take it as it were.

So I do a digital cops and what I do is, um, a bit of a cheat is that I'd go on a 3d scan store, get a head approximately the same age and just see. What it would look like if I put that over his live cast [00:49:00] and just nudge it, nudge it to fit. Yeah. And you know, obviously it goes a bit weird, but it gives you a jumping off point, doesn't it?

Yeah. And so you can go, Oh, okay, here we go. Send that off. And they go, Oh, we like the jowls. We like the forehead. We like the crow's feet. It's like a collage basically, but in 3d. It is. But, but you know, one that fits, because there's nothing worse than if you was to do A concept or when somebody sends you a mood board I want him to look like this and it's a completely different face.

Yeah. It's got different structure. He's like, well, this isn't going to work. The eyes are different distance together apart. The ears are different. You know, the nose is a different length. You know, it's too long or whatnot. Whereas this, it was a true representation of what you could physically do because you'd made it fit.

The anatomy underneath, like a prosthetic would, you know, yeah, that's your solid thing and I could knock them out so quickly. And the thing is, if you, if you, if you had a head that was kind of right, but it didn't look right somewhere because you can sculpt, you just sculpt [00:50:00] in the difference. Do you know what I mean?

So this is ended up, this is exactly what I ended up doing is that I got a face. It was lovely. It was right about the right age, about the right weathered look as it were, and it kind of fitted, but it was pulled around that much that it looked a little bit odd. But they were going, Oh yeah, this is kind of almost there.

And then it just went, then you could digitally sculpt it all in. And then they went, yep, great. So then I printed that off at half scale, and used that as my rough model to then sculpt it traditionally. Yeah, you've got a reference head right in front of you. I can look at it. That's the beauty of it. I also as well printed off in full scale, the original head that I used.

As my initial model to then pull it, pull it around and whatnot, because then I had the true form as well, and also the texture and I could judge the weight of it and things like that. Mm. So it just gave me three dimensional reference in twofold. One, what it should look like on Ed's [00:51:00] Anatomy and two, what the original one was.

Yeah. And again, you could turn it upside down, look behind it, and all sorts. And yeah, with one hand. Well, yeah, exactly. You stick it on a pole, you can spin it around. I mean, that did that level of digital competency just as a basic thing is a good thing to have because like you say, something like the 3D scans door, I've done stuff where I had to sculpt.

This was a couple of years ago for a movie called here and there was a, like a, an old sort of. Uh, she was like a dead, old dead lady. And so you want to see like details from behind the ear on the back. And so I've got heads of that sort of age and you can look at, you know, the detail from around here. No one takes photos of these.

So you'll get photos of old people, but never from some obscure angle that actually is sculpturally useful. And so even if it's just as a reference on a, on a thing, a screen you're turning around so you can deal with a 3d file and use it as a, basically as a moving photograph. So you can use that. Like you would have done a book of old, you know, faces as reference, it's really useful.

But that, [00:52:00] the nice thing about it is you are still sculpting, you're still learning, Oh, that's how the back of the neck looks. You're learning from it because it's reality captured for you to, just as if you had a real person stand there. Yeah. I mean, as I say, that job was a bit of my toe in the water on how to get.

Uh, digital workflow working for me and whatnot. And of course, I learned a ton on the job. I mean, I know I hired Adam to do the digital work, but he was very generous in explaining to me how he did what he did. So I was learning that side of things at the same time. And moving forwards, if this job come about again, and we had to do the same type of thing, I mean, the whole premise was this guy was a master of disguise and he uses extensive prosthetics to, to, to get him outta situations.

And he had this secret room in his house that had all his different disguises already set up in grow bags, grow, grow bags, not grow bags. He's not growing anything, uh, ready to go. So from a props perspective, [00:53:00] a set dressing perspective, but equally a practical, we might actually use its perspective, wouldn't it be lovely moving forwards?

Or in my head, and you know, now I feel I could do this, you know, competency in the software has come along is that I'm just going to get a nice core of his nose digitally and just knock out six to seven different nose types and then mold them and turn them into prosthetics molds. And even if I never use them, then there you go, set dressing, because it's the same thing, isn't it?

He needs to have these disguises. You put him in, you put him in his secret lair and all of a sudden you've got. Real, true, practical prosthetics that, you know, they're not mission impossible. It's not made with a computer. It is made with a computer, but you know what I mean? It feels more real. Yeah. And I could, I could probably do this sitting at home or as it turned out, I spent an awful lot of time sat in Amsterdam airport waiting to go to Budapest because I couldn't get a direct flight from here.

That was all dead time. Take my laptop now. [00:54:00] Yeah. Brilliant, isn't it? Yeah. I mean, it costs me nothing. It's time I'm being paid for anyway. But, but there's, there's only, there's only a benefit there. There's only, you'd only, it's efficient. I mean, I'm massively big, I'm trying to work as efficiently as possible.

I mean, as you say, you know, I'm pretty much a one man band and taking people as and when I can, but I always think it's important to be able to do every element yourself should you not be able to get anybody. So, but, so therefore I'm really focused on trying to work as efficiently as possible because my time is finite.

So this, to me, is quite exciting. Which is why now, whilst it's quiet, I have the Christmas period. I'm really going to try and knuckle down and learn some of the nuances, the finer nuances to bring my sculpting up to where it should be in ZBrush, that'd be good. I will get you. I will share a link. Yes. I want that link.

It's very exciting, all that stuff, those things. And the thing is, you [00:55:00] never really stop learning stuff because you just get better at it. And then you find new things. You want to, you

know, I want to conquer my fear of Zmodeler over Christmas. So I'm going to, I'm going to get to the bottom of that. You see this, this is the lovely thing.

Yeah, hard surface modeling. I want to be able to extrude things, not, not extract, but literally extrude and molding stuff. Push and pull. It's going to be so much better. See, this is a nice thing about coming to it relatively late. Cause, you know, things have been established now for quite some time by people doing what we do in our industry.

So there's now people and experiences to draw from. We're not all just fighting in the dark. You know, it's been around long enough now that, I mean, for me it's new. You know, I've dabbled, as I say, I've dabbled for years, but it was more of a case of just seeing what it did. You know, I was like a kid with crayons, but now I can focus on How it, well, I can see the practical benefits from it.

I've kind of got enough of a knowledge to know what can be done. Even if I don't know how to do it, it's anything [00:56:00] you can learn, can't you? So just, but the lovely thing is as well, I mean, particularly with Zebrish, I find, um, you don't know what it can do until you have a problem you need to overcome with it.

You know what I mean? It's like, I want to be able to do this particularly. I don't know how to do that. Go on YouTube. It can be done just because I don't know how to do it yet. And all of a sudden, now I do. And then that's, that's, I'll never, I don't think it's any one of those pieces of software you'll ever know the ins and outs of it completely.

But it's easy to find out what you need to do with it. Yeah. Which is good. Yeah. That's a very good point. It's such a vast program. You don't need to know that much. To get started. And the danger is, I think people, and I was the same. You feel like you need to know it all before you do anything and you, it's not Yeah.

And that's, you know, that's paralyzing. Yeah, it is. But you, you open up the brush menu Yeah. For the first time. And you, you see it's overwhelming, isn't it? Yeah. Like you say, how am I ever gonna wrap my head around this? Well, but only a [00:57:00] handful of those brushes will get you where you want to go. Yeah. Yeah.

It just does things. You do remember having a conversation years ago with Dave Bowell. And he, he does the most amazing artwork in Zbrush. He's an incredible artist. He's always been good with Photoshop and paints and canvas. But there you go. That's because he's an artist and he's using a tool. Yeah.

Regardless of what the tool is, the art's coming from him, isn't it? Yeah. So the desire to create something happens first. And then you pull what you need to get that made out from Yeah. Because he's, he's done that journey. Yeah. So that, that, you know, validates your point, uh, made earlier. But, um, he says he doesn't know a fat lot about Zbrush.

He might have changed now because it's been years. But, um, he was still producing amazing artwork at that stage. And he's like, I just, I just know what I need to know to get the output I want. And in that case, I don't think he's still into printing. As in, I don't think he's got there yet. I think it's still just a 2D medium for him.

But he knows enough of the [00:58:00] program to do what he wants to do. And the results are astounding, you know, so it's fantastic. Yeah, no, I see some zebra sculptors who are using, uh, you know, paint programs and so on in here to get these photorealistic renderings of portraiture

that they're doing and likeness sculptures and you look at it and there's a, uh, Chris Costa for one.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like Renaissance painting. The best you've ever seen, but it's in 3d. Yeah. If you want one renaissance painting, turn it 45 degrees, you got two. All the works there. You don't have to make it again. Yeah, it's just, yeah, it's glorious. But, um, yeah, it is. That's the thing is to have the creative and that's why I think.

It's important to instill that with the AI. It's not a promise of just like, Oh, you become someone that can just drum up a bunch of things without any effort. It's a case of, no, no, you're, you are still required to put in a lot of effort. People want that around. People will pay for that [00:59:00] because it's like any like, like, I don't know, Instagram has a bunch of filters on it.

And anyone can take a reasonably good snapshot and fuck around with the filters and make it look really cool. But that doesn't, that's not the same as being a good photographer. Not at all. If you give a good photographer the same tools as anybody else has with Instagram, they'll turn out something much better.

Yeah. Because they're already starting from a better quality. So the call to arms is to be better, to be more competent, more capable. But the point being, take all those tools away, take someone out of that environment where they have those tools and ask them to produce a good photo. They couldn't. Whereas someone that had spent the time learning photography, lighting and whatnot, and how the camera works would.

And that's the difference, isn't it? Yeah. It's all about, you know, push it in, get shit out, put good stuff in, get good stuff out. Hopefully.

Breaking into the Industry

Do you want to talk a little bit about how you started out? Like where, where, where, how did you get into this business? Okay. Um, I was a wee lad. I wasn't, I wasn't a wee lad.

Um, I got to industry quite late. Um, I was 29 when I started. [01:00:00] Originally, um, I used to be a car salesman. Um, selling everything. Nissan, BMW, Ford, Audi, Mitsubishi. Um, And I thought, genuinely thought that was going to be my life. And not, not, not anything I ever wanted to do. It's just one of those jobs you fell into.

Um, but what it did do is, um, I'd always, I'd always been a massive monster kid fan. And did you sculpt when you were younger? No, I didn't sculpt when I was younger. I used to do model kits. Okay. I used to buy little, you know, the little one, six scaled horizon muzzle kits and whatnot. And I used to, I still enjoy building and painting those.

And that was my, uh, my creative flex. I'd always painted. I'd always, as in, uh, 2D painting, always drawn, always been interested in art, and always loved movies. But when I was a kid, um, it was, it was American. You know, that's where the industry was. We didn't really have an industry in the UK. That was just because I didn't know, you know, before the internet.

[01:01:00] And, uh, yeah, so I found myself being a car salesman. But what it did afford me is that because you'd work the weekends, you'd have a day off in the week. And then of course in the week, all your mates are working. So I got particularly bored. So then I'd pick up painting again and I'd pick up model kits and then I thought to myself I'm spending a lot of money on these kits that I'm actually not doing anything with Then I thought well, maybe I can make

something myself and then I started getting a bit more creative Sculpting and whatnot and I was like, well, I really did enjoy makeup stuff so I thought then I'll try and get into that and then the internet took off more than what it was and Uh, more than what it was back then.

And, you know, it was back in the days of forums. So you'd have the effects lab. Millennium. The effects lab was great. The effects lab, um, Millennium effects had a forum as well. And all of a sudden you was, you was exposed to professionals, people that did this in, as an industry in the UK as well. And, um, there was a wealth of information there and they'd talk to you.

You know, it doesn't matter where you come from. They'd talk to you. [01:02:00] And that's, that's the thing I've always found in this industry is that There's, it doesn't matter where you come from, if you, if you've got the respect and if you've got the drive, people will help you. That's always been the way. So anyway, um, I started dabbling on my days off, started sticking shit on my mates.

Um, I remember my first prosthetic was, um, a straight A and B, really crude looking, um, werewolfy thing that my, one of my friends volunteered for me to stick on and I bought myself a bottle of glue. Thinking, oh, it's glue. It's not that strong. Didn't bother with any remover. And the next day, he had an interview, and he couldn't get it off properly, so, uh, he had to shave his face to try and get the residual glue off.

So that was quite fun. Um, But anyway, um, Are you still friends? Yeah, actually. Crazy man. Um, But yeah, so anyway, long story short, you know, as I started really enjoying this and whatnot, the light bulb come, well, maybe, You [01:03:00] could try and do this as a job. And it just so happened that, um, I booked myself on a Geordie Shell mask making course down at Millennium Effects.

And, um What year would that have been, do you remember? Oh, God, 2008? I think I might have been at Millennium Effects. I was there then. You were there. I was there. Yeah, you were there. I'll tell you for why. And the first book had just come out. Yep. Because you came through to help us mix the plaster. And you said to, and I'll never forget this.

You said to me, Oh, nice cult sculpt. And I turned around and said, Oh, nice book. And I thought, that's me really slick. And you're like, Oh, thanks. Who's this guy? And, um, so I remember that. Um, but my point for going is one, I wanted to meet Georgia and I wanted to be in that environment, but I also wanted to basically sneak over next door to millennium and actually have a look and see if this would be.

A viable career, as it were. It was kind of like, I'll pay to go on this course and have a look. And I did that course, and I went through, and I made myself up a little [01:04:00] portfolio. And I managed to colonel that millennium, and he very graciously had a look. And obviously tore it to shreds. Um, but he did it in a very nice way.

No, he didn't. And um So anyway, I left and, uh, I thoroughly enjoyed it and I thought, you know what, yeah, this, this is a world I could see myself in. And then, um, I got home and obviously got the blues because it had been this amazing creative experience and all of a sudden I've got to go and bloody drive around looking at Ford dealers and all this rubbish.

So I thought I'll book on another course, you know, get my fix. And it just so happened, I looked and they were advertising a six month skillset apprenticeship. So I discussed it with the wife and I was like, what'd you reckon? She's like, well, there's no money. I said, well, yeah, but I'm not happy. So in it to win it type thing.

So I did it, applied and, um, very fortunately got it. So I quit my job, which was a big risk, you know, living up here in Birmingham as well, you know, a nice, safe, secure [01:05:00] job. Went and drove down to Millennium in Chesham, back and forth every day, 180 miles every day for six months. Well, it was cheaper than trying to get a hotel because the money was shocking, but being an apprenticeship, you expect it.

That was it. Never looked back. Six months guaranteed doing wonderful stuff. You know, I say it was wonderful, wonderful stuff. My stuff was rubbish, but they trusted me to do stuff and work on Doctor Who and The very spin offs and whatnot and we did a couple of low budget movies Which they let me have a good go at and stuff and you know Just being in that environment and then being surrounded by the likes of Dave Bunnywell Gary Pollard Dave Malinowski was in there painting as well in Morse He just learned so much so quickly and then the apprenticeship ended and you had to leave because that was the deal because it was all about of Training someone up and then making, letting them get work elsewhere.[01:06:00]

So then that was quite panicking, but I managed to scrounge a little bit at work. I think it was at, uh, Schooner ads and then went back to Millennium and then that was it really. I was a freelancer. Wow. Yeah. And you've grown so quick. You, it just seemed like you were designed to do this. This is what you should be doing.

I love my job. I love this industry. You know what I mean? There's, there's stresses and there's, there's times where you, you kick yourself and stuff, but the, the, the be all and end all of it is we're, we're in a privileged industry. Oh yeah. We've got playing make believe for a living. Oh yeah. How cool is that?

Yeah. I remember saying to Neil on my interview, cause this, the interview itself was quite fun cause I trekked down to millennium and they'd just been broken into. So, um, Rob, bless him, was nailing plywood to the door, looked thoroughly annoyed. And I'm like, oh, I'm here for an interview, or Jove, and whatnot.

And he sort of growled at me. [01:07:00] I thought, oh, this is going well. And, uh, sat down with Neil, and he was like, why do you want to do this? I said, oh, you know, if you enjoy what you do, you never work a day in your life. And he just looked at me deadpan and says, you bloody do. I don't think he used the word bloody, but you get the idea.

And, uh, no, it was, it was, it was good. Very fortunate. A lot of applicants and, uh, me and a guy called Stuart Semenowski got it. And we had, we had the best six months. It's brilliant. Yeah. But yeah, I mean, yeah, this is a great industry. It is.

Balancing Creativity and Business

But you also have a very, um, matter of fact attitude about a lot of things, which I think is a very useful thing.

It might be because you had a big chunk of your adult life not doing the creative work. Yeah. And I see a lot of people get paralyzed because they love what they do and they like to be creative, but there's also a part of them that they're people pleasers. I find a lot of. A lot of people that do this stuff that knew they wanted to do stuff a long time, they're quite sensitive.

They're not very [01:08:00] well business minded and they're, I don't want to say easy to manipulate, but you will find a lot of people that have been pushed around by producers who

are designed to find basically weak people that will say yes to things that they would probably be better off saying no to. And then just churning through those types of people.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Just rinsing people out. And it seems to me you've always had a very. Clear idea about what's, like, if it's not worth doing, you not, not in, um, not in a mean way, but you're very like, pragmatic about what does or doesn't happen that's, that's gonna take too long. That's not worth it. You know what I mean?

Yeah. And I think that's held you in very good stead. And I've taken that as a, as, as an example in my head. Often I find myself in Lynn. I'm thinking, what would Richard do? No, don't ever think that. Um, maybe, maybe it is. I mean, you know, um. When you sell, I mean, selling cars is easy, let's be honest. But, um, at the same time you do come into people, especially when you sell BMWs.

Um, you, I might insult people here, but you, you tend to find that somebody that buys one of those knows what they want [01:09:00] and they, they'll, they'll hammer you to get it, as it were. So you do develop a relatively thick skin and learn how to negotiate. And essentially you got to learn your value. You got to know your worth, you know, because you're not there to be stepped on.

And, you know, don't get me wrong, I was doing that when I was in my 20s, so, my early 20s, so. It does, sort of, make you have a little bit of a backbone, I guess. And, um The problem is not, not, not, not the problem, but you find that if you've only ever done this job or, you know, you've come up, especially these days, now that you can go through school, college, university and whatnot, and there's all these qualifications and there's all these courses that are allegedly there to Prepare you for this world, um, but they don't teach you the business side of things and therefore people are desperate for work and they'll climb over each other to get a job and whatnot.

And that's not necessarily the best thing and stuff. So, um, I do believe that coming to [01:10:00] it later as it afforded me to have a rounder image of what business looks like. Therefore, you get to sort of understand the other side of it a little bit more rather than being, um, yeah, pretty much. And they do say, you know, artists don't make great business people.

And I suppose if you're a creative person, you just want to create, that's all you want to do. So if someone's offering you a little bit of money to be able to do that, you can jump at it. But at the same time, you've got to go, well, actually, I'm a skilled person here. This is skilled work. Took me years to learn how to do this.

Yeah. I mean, you have to think of yourself like a plumber in some respects. If a plumber comes around your house, he'll tell you how much it's going to cost you. And you either pay it or you don't, and they don't do it. You don't have someone come around your house, a trades person, you go, okay, well, I want this doing, and I'm going to pay you this much.

Okay. Well, no, it's going to cost you this much. And I think sometimes we, we lose that. We lose our own value. We, you know, we don't work out how long things time, you [01:11:00] know, what our time is worth. You know, we just want to create and that's our passion and whatnot. And unfortunately, as you say, that can be abused.

It's a tricky one. That was a fucking gold dust, but a moment on that. Oh, sorry, mate. I mean, great. That was really good. That was really good. Cause I say, I see that a lot in colleges I think

the other issue is, well they don't teach you how to budget, you know, how to bid for a, for. Job. No. Well, they don't.

Well, some, some courses do, but we've covered it very clearly. Yeah. We did a big, we did a big thing on it with a, with an episode and show notes. But the other thing is as well, and I say this as someone that teaches at makeup schools, but there isn't really like a triaging of who goes to join the makeup school, but you'll get people going on makeup course because it sounds like an easy option.

Cause they said, Trisha, you're going to do something, get out of the house, right? Or you're make that course because I like movies. Yeah. I had animation students in, in a [01:12:00] drawing class that wanted to be an animator because they liked cartoons. And that's, and that's, you know, that's not a bad thing, but you've got to understand it's, it's watching a cartoon and being an animator, not the same thing, just like eating a meal and being a chef and not the same thing.

Not at all. Not at all. What's on your plate depends who's put it there. Yeah. And when, when I'm saying with the student thing, it's kind of like, what I mean is you don't tend to get people join the SAS or become lawyers because they thought it was easy. That's why they're there, but you do get people going to makeup courses who were there because the other stuff sounded difficult.

So there's a percentage of people on those courses that are there because they're, they were looking for or hoping for an easier ride. And so. So the people that are going to work hard and try hard and think hard are going to get. So my point is, I think you get a disproportionate amount of emotionally fragile people doing creative things, which means there's a disproportionate amount of people who aren't business minded who are also creative.

So you're going to find, and I may be wrong, but there's plenty of makeup. People I know who [01:13:00] based, they've been taken for a ride by people because they could spot that they would agree to things that they probably should say no to, because they don't know their worth or they have a low self esteem. And we need to work on that as a society and build people up.

The thing is saying no to something is not a bad thing. I mean, if you asked me to do something and it was inconvenient to me to do it, I'd have no issue saying no to you. I do it politely and I'd explain why I couldn't do it. But if you then took. Offense to that, then that's your problem, not mine. You know what I mean?

Because I'm perfectly entitled to not do it. Yes. You know, you can justify your reasons. Exactly. You can't justify why you're doing don't. Yeah. I mean, if you ask me to help you, obviously I'll break, you know, bent over backwards to help you. But you know, if somebody ask you to do well, yeah. But these are my terms, these are my conditions.

This is what I need to be able to have for me to do this for you. And in, you know, job wise, you know, I've got. I've got bills to pay. I've got a mortgage to pay. I've got a kid to raise. I've got a wife, uh, thankfully she owns her own money. But, um, you know, these are all [01:14:00] my lifestyle. I've got a workshop to pay for.

I've got materials to pay for. I've got rates. I've got electric. I've got consumables. All these things cost money. And unless you're not going to compensate me for that, then what you're asking me to do is give you charity. It's not business. Yeah. No, he's not a bad word. Telling someone to how you say it.

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That's the trick, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Saying I will do it for you, but I'm worth more than what you're offering. Yeah. It's having that belief that you are correct to say so, but like I say, wording it correctly, but yeah, it's down to self belief and I get it. I totally understand because you know, when you're starting out, you don't necessarily know what you're worth, but it's not for somebody else to tell you, you know?