

#21

ARTISTCLOSEUP

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by Jan-Gero Kleist



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Interview

James Storm

Multi-award-winning filmmaker James M. Storm began making backyard movies at the age of six. Filmmaking was an artistic passion early on that later became an obsession when he officially launched his film production company J.S. Co. Productions Digital Video Studios in 1999. Since then, James has self produced dozens of feature and documentary films and won dozens of awards in film festivals around the world. Fiercely independent, James has unapologetically rejected the Hollywood system in pursuit of maintaining his creative and artistic integrity in his films. James currently is working on his latest film masterpiece out of his private studio in San Diego, California.





What is your background and how did you start your journey in the art world?

“Drawing, painting, sculpting, and most importantly storytelling as a little kid were instinctual from birth. Around the age of six I made good use of the family video camera by making elaborate backyard movies - a practice that led to my lifelong obsession of filmmaking. It became apparent to me right away that my movies were the perfect exhibition platform not only to integrate my physical artwork but also to showcase it and preserve it as well. For example, the Magic Piano prop for my short film Captain Fantastic and the Magic Piano. This hand built digital piano boasted thousands of color changing LED lights, built in Bluetooth amplification system, a light up keyboard, and more. It was a sixth month build and one of my gorgeous creations. I’m thrilled that it will be forever preserved in this spectacular little film.”





What inspires you?

"I love to thrill people; it's as simple as that. Cinematic storytelling is an art form with its roots going all the way back to the world's first prehistoric cave paintings. Be it for social progress or pure escapism, it seems that humanity has always had the need to "talk story." These days people go to the movies for that same emotional release. Maybe they need to go and laugh, or cry, be scared or get angry or get turned on; in one form or another it's a cultural imperative. That's why I try not to take my God given gift of storytelling for granted by making sure that when watching my films my audience will have an irrevocable and fascinating experience. I refuse to waste a single moment of screen time. Every frame from one of my films should be a shining example of color, light, and composition."

What themes do you pursue? Is there an underlying message in your work?

"Most of the time I seem to gravitate towards telling stories about good and evil. I guess I'm old school in that way. Perseverance and hope are other recurring themes in my films. Telling stories about the underdog individual up against insurmountable odds is something everyone can relate to. I know I can relate because I am the proverbial underdog, probably most tortured artists are. That's why I like to see the unlikely hero win even if it's only a movie. It gives us hope and hope is something all of society could use. Truly I hope that my films, either by quality or by effort, will inspire hope and perseverance in others."

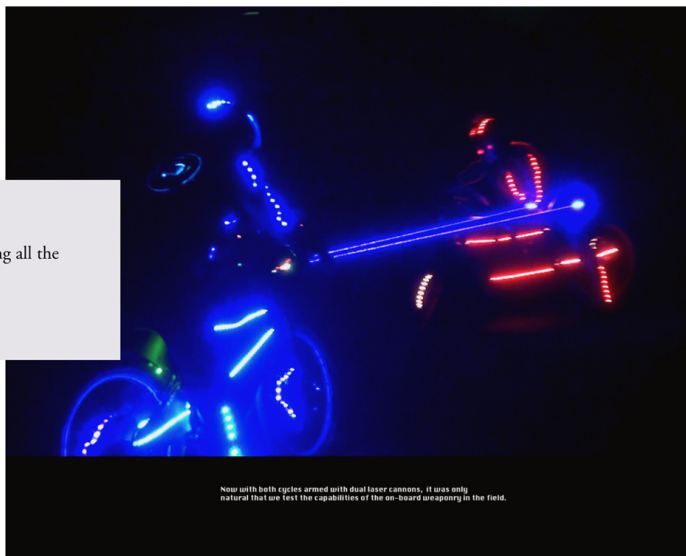
How would you describe your work?

"It's always my directive to take people away from the mundane. My films are incredibly visual by design. Now you are probably thinking, "Aren't all films visual?" Well no, sometimes they are strictly informative. Let's just say I'm more attracted to the romantic atmosphere of an epic alien world than I would be directing some sterile soap opera. My audience can count on the fact that when watching one of my films they are going to see something incredible, frightening, or beautiful. At the very least they are going to have some fun."

Which artists influence you most?

"As an indie filmmaker I'm always impressed and inspired by filmmakers that do it all themselves and carve out their own way because that's what I'm trying to do. In the entertainment industry everything is so painfully corrupt and formulated including the so-called "path to success." Sure, anyone might be able to work his or her way through the system and score the big break - but at what cost? Selling out is a very real danger to all indie artists as it offers the lure of acceptance and security. It's very difficult for a filmmaker in this day and age to maintain artistic integrity. Yet still there are a few out there that do and I always try to support those brave filmmakers."

"Cinematic storytelling is an art form with its roots going all the way back to the world's first prehistoric cave paintings."



Now with both cycles armed with dual laser cannons, it was only natural that we test the capabilities of the on-board weaponry in the field.

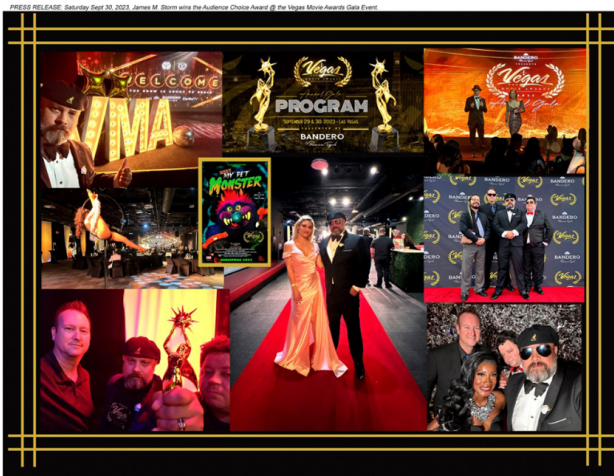


What is your creative process like?

“As a filmmaker, I always fully conceptualize my next project in my head before doing anything else. Meaning that by the time I sit down to write the screenplay or novel I've spent literally years thinking about it, problem solving it, etc. I know this might be out of the norm for most writers as not everyone has the incredible mental powers of visualization that I have but that's what I do. Once I have figured everything else out in my head I'll begin writing the screenplay, creating the production art, etc.”

What is an artist's role in society and how do you see that evolving?

“Right now, Hollywood as we know it is imploding. Like the fire of Prometheus, where once the power to create cinematic art rested only in the hands of the big studio gods, the common man now has the opportunity to achieve cinematic greatness. Social media and streaming platforms have changed the game in entertainment and I think the people are ready for it. Now even the lowliest YouTuber can build a channel that results in global fame and fortune. That's awesome. Mark my words; it's going to be the fringe artists like myself that are going to save entertainment. This is a massive responsibility, I know. My best advice to my fellow artists is stay true to themselves and never give up.”



Have you had any noteworthy exhibitions you'd like to share?

“Just recently, I had the great pleasure of screening my 80's fan film "Meet My Pet Monster" at the prestigious Vegas Movie Awards in Las Vegas Nevada. In all we took home seven trophies including the coveted audience choice award, which was an incredible honor. Other projects like our multi-award-winning documentary "The Electric Cycle Racing League" screened at the Beyond Hollywood International Film Festival in Hollywood California. We are very proud of that. In all we have won over one hundred and fifty film festivals in this recent submission cycle and we are currently hard at work on our next series of mind-blowing cinematic art.”

Instagram: [@js_co_productions](https://www.instagram.com/js_co_productions)

Other links: electriccyclerracingleague.com



James M. Storm

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jscompanyproductions.com electriccycleracingleague.com



Electric Cycle (top left)
steel, electronics
81 cm x 152 cm x 30 cm
2020

**Release Posters: The Electric Cycle Racing League,
Vaperwave, Captain Fantastic and the Magic Piano (top right)**
digital
91 cm x 60 cm
2017 - 2022

The Magic Piano (bottom)
wood, glass, electronics
121 cm x 140 cm x 60 cm
2016