

TERESE NIELSEN: ANGER AND INTUITION

THE ART OF ALTERING IV BY NANA

Her delicate look might be confused with fragility. Big mistake. No way near reality.

Born and grown in Nebraska, her childhood prepared her for hard working, to set up goals and reach them:

TN: Growing up on a farm with two brothers, irrigating the corn fields, driving a truck by the time I was nine years old, knowing that I was not only capable but needed... these things set a solid foundation of hard work and confidence, and a desire to build a different life for myself. I was highly motivated to get an education, become successful, and move out of the small town where I grew up so I wouldn't end up working on a farm or in a meat packing plant for the rest of my life. Art was my ticket out.

“I wouldn't end up working on a farm or in a meat packing plant”



Secluded Glen by Terese Nielsen

Living on a farm surrounded by corn fields doesn't really help building up a social life, so, drawing and painting with her brothers turned out to be a precious activity during the long and rough winters.

Dazzled by the talent of her older brother, Ron Spencer, she decided to give herself a chance during a long absence of him and study art.



Terese Nielsen

Shortly after, her work was being paid with recognition and, her tenacity and effort made her work day and night, to achieve her goals.

Her efforts started to produce excellent results. It's then when she decided to jump forward.



Star Wars-Mandatory Retirement by Terese Nielsen

With only two hundred dollars and half a tank of gas, she headed to Los Angeles, more precisely to the city of Pasadena, which is more than two thousand five hundred kilometers from her hometown, to sign in at the competitive, famous and awarded Art Center College of Design, where you have to prove your skills before being accepted.

At this point of history I wonder: ¿Has my life been what I wanted it to be? Then I realize that the approach is wrong. ¿Is my life what I want it to be? That would be a right approach.

Back to what is important. Ready to live her dream, Terese could study most of the time thanks to fellowships and, when facing bad times, she never gave up. In a world with a clear predominance of the

masculine sex, where a begging friend assured her failure besides her tremendous talent, due to her futile woman condition, she outstands and got a job wherever she presented her "book", proving how wrong those words were.



Elisen - RPG: 7th Sea by Terese Nielsen

Once graduated with "Great Distinction", the highest mark possible, she started her voyage through the illustration world: PC covers and booklets, card collectible games, magazines, comics, book covers, posters... and of course, Magic: The Gathering.



Xena by Terese Nielsen

But all that past, according to her philosophy, it has a relative weight:

TN: I guess you could say that every experience in my life, whether directly art related or not, ultimately contributed to who I've become as a person, which, of course, influences my art. I think that who we become as a result of our life experiences is more important than what we do.

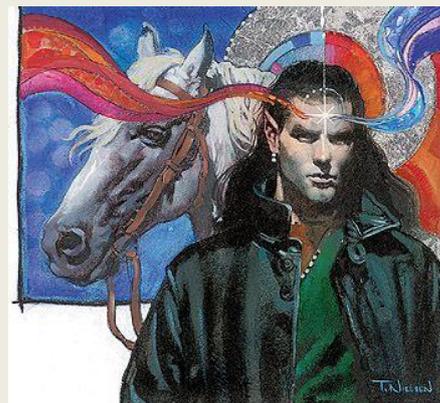
"Who we become as a result of our life experiences is more important than what we do"

Terese began with ALLIANCES and she's being active in MTG since then. The reason of her success and continuance it's clear according to one of the WOTC Art Directors: "You are one of few artists to whom I can't categorize, you do everything well".*



Elvish Ranger by Terese Nielsen

Her intuition almost reaches clairvoyance, her art show what she's asked for and beyond. Indeed, she's been included in various volumes of the Spectrum (THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY FANTASTIC ART).



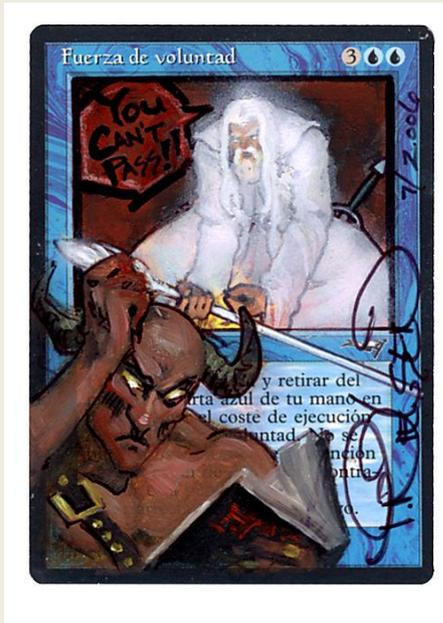
Dragon-interiors-Mind Mage by Terese Nielsen

If we ask her for guidance to make good quality alterations, her answer talks about detailed interior dialogues:

TN: I would say that you just need to pick an artist that is professional and has a

style that you like. If you have something in mind, a certain way you're envisioning the card, be sure to tell the artist what you are hoping for so you have a good chance of getting what you want.

On her alterations she uses only black permanent markers and acrylic paintings.



Fuerza de voluntad by Terese Nielsen

Hard to stand still, in other words.



I'm holding myself again... when I read the time she invests on each alteration:

TN: It usually takes me anywhere from 1-2 hours to create an alteration, depending on how complex the design is.

Thanks God that she needs a kind environment to paint, because one starts to think of self dedicating to macrame.

N: How is your workplace? Do you have any mania when you establish your workplace environment?

TN: I really like my work space to be clean and organized and quiet. My biggest "mania" is trying to get myself to sit down in my chair long enough to do my work! I think there are medications that might help, but I'm not taking them yet! :-)

"My biggest "mania" is trying to get myself to sit down in my chair long enough to do my work! "



Her favorite alteration is the one that features Hellboy and, regarding to her illustrations, the list gets longer:

TN: My favorite illustrations include: Stream of Life, Eternal Witness, Samite Elder, Moonsprite, Silvercoat Lion (online card only)

My favorite alteration features Hellboy.

Her protocol when it comes to executing alterations gets straight to your jugular:

TN: I find reference material for whatever I'm going to be drawing, and then I get my permanent black archival marker and start sketching right on the Magic card. Then I get out my acrylics and start painting, just like a mini Magic card painting.



Stream of life by Terese Nielsen

She inspires avoiding the monotony and seeks the diversity, although the backdrop, it's inevitably the same: Force of Will, perhaps one of the most altered cards in Magic History.

TN: I like to find out what the person who is ordering the alteration is interested in so they're involved in the creative process. I want to make sure the alteration blends their love of Magic with their other interests.

I prefer that all of them are different ideas, so not only is each alteration completely unique I don't get bored painting the same thing over and over.



Started with the alterations excited about the expectation that they generated. Not really fair compared to her artistic capabilities, the style is fresh, straight and vigorous.

TN: It was a fun new way of making miniature paintings that players got extremely excited about it



Samite Elder by Terese Nielsen

And I couldn't help but ask the question:

N: What do you think about the "pimp" movement in general? What consideration deserves you this current so narrowly bounded to the field of the alterations, which generates the need, zeal and even devotion for the exclusivity and "preciousness" in the deck, in agreement to certain standards about the border color, card language, edition, version, alterations, illustrator signatures, etc.?



Natural order by Terese Nielsen

TN: Huh? :-) I'm not exactly sure what you're asking, but if you're asking why I think the alterations are so popular, I don't know exactly. I've been told it can be intimidating to the opponent when a player throws down a card that is uniquely original although many that have alterations done don't ever play with them. I think theirs a big 'coolness' factor in having an actual Magic card artist customize your own card with an idea that is your very own. There's no other Force of Will on the planet that looks like that. How can you not be in love with that idea?

Well then, from now on we'll alter the FoW with bazookas, u know, for intimidation and... Although, carrying a G-11 o a M-16 wouldn't be that bad, you could carry them in your purse and you got all your stuff pretty controlled.

As complete as she can be, she's tried to learn to play Magic, but I'm pretty sure she's not going to reach many top8's:



Eternal witness by Terese Nielsen

TN: I'm not. I've tried a couple times but I think it's best if I leave the playing up to you guys and the painting up to me. :)

Simple and affable with people, keeps

thinking that the stars belong only to the sky. Loyal to her values cooperates with the RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) Charity Calendar directed by Tori Amos, as long as with other projects whose goals are far away from materialism.



Terese Nielsen para Tori Amos RAINN calendar

Tired of the dark side of fantastic art, her need of light beings that express her own interior feelings on her work was waiting for a chance to express and achieve, that way, her most secret desires and wishes, hungry of humanity and illumination.



Moonsprite by Terese Nielsen

"After 15 years of illustrating, I'd come to a place in my career where money or high profile pieces just didn't motivate me anymore. I was starting to feel dead, artistically, so I decided to take a sort of plunge, if you will, that felt like spiritual liberation and financial suicide by turns. I

made a conscious decision to let go of some of the illustration jobs that consistently supported violence as entertainment. *

"I was starting to feel dead, artistically,"

And chance is just a matter of time, because I'm pretty convinced, that chance doesn't exist.

*"As you can imagine, this was the job I'd been waiting for... the job of my dreams. Never before or since has an assignment touched my soul like Angel Quest. It was much more of a calling than a job, and it stretched all of my talents and abilities to their fullest extent." **

She's totally given the best out of herself on the Angel Quest project; you only got to watch at the illustrations to see what I mean:



Angel of Comfort by Terese Nielsen

Splendid on her strokes and with a total control of the human and animal anatomy, her drawings and paintings are immortals. Ethereal and mystical, gives her art that escapes from the canvas to hug you.

Provides her characters with their own life and awards a soul to their eyes to contact the spectator so you can hear the beats of their hearts. Provoking, in some way, a seduction that awakes your emotions.

Colors and lights meet together to put down the shades where they belong.

Depth and intensity ally to offer magic at the most pure state, on visions that will enter through our eyes but will never go away.

Terese managed to integrate her art into what she wants as a lifestyle, linking talent, heart and soul in a parade of learning and self-breaking that allows her, not only to look her on a mirror, but also resurrect it.

Nana, September 2008©

Translation from original to English: Jordi Amat, October 2008©

* Biography _ The Art of Terese Nielsen
<http://www.tnielsen.com/>