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My mother in law made me do it

[2/13/2007] Alexis Puentes blames his wife's mother for his profession. The Florida based Puentes has been a freelance graphic designer since 1993, but embarked as a pro in mid 2005.

Written by: Tormod G. Rossavik

- Back in 1992 I didn't own a computer, but was able to use a 386 that belonged to my mother-in-law. We lived a block from her, and I remember my wife and I used to carry the computer and monitor to our house every night, and then return it to her in the morning so that she could do her work. And that really did it for me. I fell in love with computers, and graphic design, so soon after that, the first Pentium came out and we bought one. There has been no turning back since.

When asked what inspires him, he replies that he's always looking for new ideas and inspiration in everything I see.

- It can be the sleek lines on a sports car, a flower, an electronic gadget, etc. I am always looking at everything around me and translating it into my designs. I ask myself how I can communicate some of those feelings through my work. The work of others also inspires me and triggers new ideas. *There's not a favorite artist, but being an avid reader of almost all of the graphic design and photography magazines helps him to stay current with latest trends, and fuel new ideas.*

When asked how he creates the colorful backdrops that you see on most of his designs, the answer is that they actually come from everyday objects that he photographs and then blurs in Photoshop.

- I have recently started integrating Illustrator work into my designs, but for the most part it's layers and layers of little details. Some of my original files can be as large as 300MB.

Being a busy designer, how do you combine work and family?

- It's not easy, because I really wish I had more time to spend with my family and at the same time wish I had more time to play and explore. I really don't like to sacrifice my quality time with my loved ones, so I have learned to be creative time wise and do most of my work after hours. I used to carry a little journal with me and make rough sketches, of ideas, etc. but nowadays I just carry with me my 20D, that way I can take a snapshot of a color scheme I like, an object or a place that strikes new ideas, etc. Having the camera with me at all times also helps, since I can be taking pictures of the family or an outing one minute and switching lenses and shooting microstock the next. Life is fast paced at this stage, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

What are the ups and downs of microstock?

- Hmm, well in my case I really can't say there has been any negative side to the industry. I love seeing how my work is being used and to be able to help others through my designs. One of my pieces ended up on one of the annual reports for the March of Dimes just last year and that really has inspired me to do more and more. Money is good, and I am working on a new series so I know it's only going to get better. But being around other creative's and sharing our thoughts and ideas really tops it off. In a nutshell, the microstock industry has helped take my work to new levels and keeps pushing me to new heights.

Do you have any good tips for those about to launch a career in the microstock industry?

- I would recommend that before they jump in, to do a little bit of research. Take some time and explore the work of the major contributors, and see how your work compares. See what's in demand and what's not, or ask yourself if there is a certain niche you can explore. Join in the discussion via the forums at an agency such as this one, ask questions and learn from others. By doing some research you'll increase the chances of becoming successful in the industry, save everyone some work (believe me, the image inspectors will thank you :) and be more productive.

Besides being with you family, what do you like doing when not working??

- Besides the obvious, I love playing Age of Empires and Civilization, oh and I am a history freak, I always have a history book I'm working on.

Have you read any good books lately?

- I just finished Six Days of War, Rise and Fall of the Third Reich and The Art of War. I told you I am a history freak?

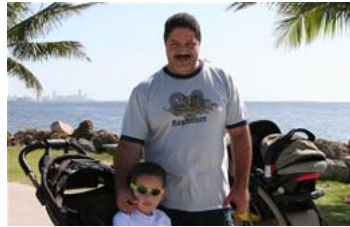
Check out Alexis' [bright portfolio here](#).

Got any comments on Alexis work, or his taste in computer games? Have your say [here!](#)

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Perfect timing



Alexis Puentes with one of his little ones



Distressed cuban flag

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Judge Ross

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