



*I Screamed to the Sky*



**TRANSFORMED**



*To boldly go*



# SHAT HITS THE CANVAS

## AN ILLUSTRATED RETROSPECTIVE OF BILL SHATNERS 76 YEARS OF GRACING OUR PLANET

WORDS BY NIC WILSON

2007 won't be remembered for many things. The Iraq War still sucking. Iranians behaving badly. Setting the Doomsday Clock back to five minutes of midnight. But there is one thing this mediocre year has given us that I believe future

generations will actually give two fignuts about: the Shatner Show.

That's right. William Shatner has an art exhibition dedicated to his larger-than-life self, thanks to a husband and wife pair of his fellow Canadians- Janine Vangool and Glen Dresser. They concocted the show while driving through the Canadian countryside, listening to Shatner's most recent spoken-word album, *Has Been-* which was applauded for the same gentle self-mockery that has become the calling card of the modern, gnome-insulting Shatner.

Now I grew up on reruns of the original *Star Trek*. I learned the lurid lapdance of love from the way Kirk's gaze seduced countless alien women. I'm certain this warped me- no pun intended- beyond the reach of modern psychology; I am still inexplicably attracted to green women (partially explaining why I have a complete run of *She-Hulk*, but head trauma has to figure in there at some point, too).





OPPOSITE PAGE: Doug Fraser. LEFT: Russell Walks. ABOVE: Ronald Kurniawan

## “I LEARNED THE LURID LAPDANCE OF LOVE FROM THE WAY KIRK’S GAZE SEDUCED COUNTLESS ALIEN WOMEN”

Vangool (quite possibly the best sci-fi villain name ever), a graphic designer and owner/curator of the UPPERCASE gallery in Calgary, planned the exhibit to feature 76 artists, one to commemorate each year Shatner has graced this undeserving planet of ours with his quality. One artist missed the deadline, so there are in fact only 75- but there were enough artists contributing multiple pieces to take care of Shatner well into the next decade.

Vangool describes herself as a casual fan of Shatner’s when they started, but that her admiration for the actor only increased, in part because of the fearlessness with which he attacks new projects. She explains, “Canadians are proud of other Canadians,” but that he is humorous, iconic, and loved by many. However, she was reluctant to quantify his value- I am not. He is easily the equal of ten Bryan Adamses. By comparison, Ryan Reynolds is a 5, and Alannis Morrisette is a 6 (Rylannis Reynolsette- their combined tabloid persona, was a 7.5).

The exhibit is terrifically varied in its styles and tone, an homage in itself perhaps to Shatner’s many roles. When asked which piece she’d display in her home, Vangool quickly jumped at Karen Klassen’s depiction of “the classic ladies’ man Captain Kirk, but he also seems vulnerable and innocent.” Dewar’s golden nightmare proclaims Shatner the Intergalactic Love God (although it could be argued birth pronounced him thus, and the painting

merely echoes that reality). Mark Dulmudge’s addition practically screams at you, and is equally disturbing for appearing to be the deranged Trekkie lovechild of Shatner and Gilbert Gottfried (I think I can speak for our magazine when I say that we would pay big bucks, for verified photographic evidence of their coupling).

Zina Saunders delivers up a thoughtful and contemplative Bill, backstage, lit with a low red light- the actor himself liked it so much he chose it as his gift from the exhibit. Fraser’s amorous embrace brings a smile to anyone who remembers the classic fight that inspired it, and, well, a smile of a different color to the herpetophiles among us.

Particularly imaginative is professional LEGO sculptor Sean Kenney’s impressive 9,000 piece bust of Shatner’s Boston Legal character, Denny Crane.

When I spoke with Vangool about the exhibit, I suggested Nimoy as a follow-up- he’s also 76, beloved, Trek-bonified. The Bad Spock blog has given potential artists a head start, and Nimoy could be enticed by offering to fill half the exhibit with his nude photographic portrayals of plump ladies. But Vangool insists that the gallery isn’t about Star Trek, nor even celebrities, and while this dashed my dreams of someday cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Bad Spock BBW exhibit, I realized she was right. Part of the glory of



ABOVE: Joy Ang. RIGHT: Zina Saunders.

## **“THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE EDUCATION THE BIRD, WHILE GIVING SHATNER HIS DUE”**

Shatner lies in his uniqueness, and a part of the majesty of the Shatner Show is its limitation.

When asked, Vangool admitted she was tempted to take the Show on the road, but the complexity and time it would have involved made it impossible. Many of the pieces have since been purchased by private collectors (and indeed, some of the other pieces are still up for sale), and sadly, the exhibit closed at the end of August. But it lives on (and prospers) in the book, which can be purchased from the site and in the virtual version of the Show. Vangool promises on a stack of babies (I didn't ask where she got them) that it would stay online until the end of the year, viewable by anyone with access to a Commodore 64 (or higher) at: [www.theshatnershow.com](http://www.theshatnershow.com)

My writing teachers admonished me about ending with a quote, giving someone else the final say, so this is a rare opportunity to give education the bird, while giving Shatner his due for saying: “out of awe, amusement, or pity, you should come and see this unique show.”

The Shatner Show book is now available from [www.theshatnershow.com](http://www.theshatnershow.com).



