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El Muerto

Introducing comic artist Javier Hernandez

By Kat Avila | Web Published 7.29.2004

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Diego de la Muerte, a.k.a. El Muerto, the Aztec Zombie, the fearless flatliner, friend to the living and the dead!"

--El Muerto in "You Only Die Twice!" (c) 2000



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El Muerto's got style and is pretty sexy for a dead guy. I looked up his creator Javier Hernandez at this year's Comic-Con International in San Diego, July 22-25. Last time I checked in personally with Javier was two years ago, and I wanted to see if the live-action film based on his superhero comic was out yet.

Sharing the Los Comex booth with Javier in the Small Press Pavilion was Rooster, lead singer of the Oregon punk/progressive rock band Core13. Core13 released its debut album in January with Javier having done the CD cover artwork.

The second issue of El Muerto's adventures, MISHMASH, came out just in time for the convention. "Mad Martian Party," "You Only Die Twice" (with Manga Muerto), and the autobiographical "Dos Mil" are previously published stories. "Dead Forever" is a new story. At the back of the comic book are enjoyable re-interpretations of the character El Muerto by other artists.

When asked about the live-action film, Javier said the film rights had been sold in May 2003. All he could say was the independent film is in development right now.

Javier teaches a comic book workshop at the Pico Rivera Centre for the Arts. His teenaged students meet once a week for two hours. Over a period of five weeks, they learn about storytelling, layout design, and lettering techniques. When the course is over, they take home their own photocopied comic, not much unlike the folded 11" x 17" B&W "El Muerto: The Menace of the Man Swamp" workshop model Javier showed me.

You can usually find Javier at the Alternative Press Expo (APE) in San Francisco or at Comic-Con International in San Diego. He occasionally makes appearances at Los Angeles-area stores and festivals.

Coverage of Javier's activities has appeared in the Whittier Daily News, San Gabriel Valley Tribune, and Pico Rivera Profile. The latest mention is in The Disembodied Brain, a sci-fi web log.

Now I will wait patiently for the third issue of El Muerto, wondering if the Aztec gods of Death and Destiny will ever give their favorite crime-busting zombie slave an afterlife paycheck. Maybe he'll get a sidekick?

If you want to learn more, see Javier's web site at www.hollywoodcomics.com/hernandez.html and Core13's web site at www.core13.net. Kat's web site is at www.geocities.com/buscandocalifornia.



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