

You're never alone with a skull on a pole. Especially one which lights your way through as dark a place as this.

- The Ascension Chamber - Home-grown archetypes just like Le Comte used to make 'em
- The Schoolyard - New schools of magick
- Down to the River - Kicking ass for the *Lord*
- The Freak Hut - Critters: we got 'em

Ascension Chamber

The Working Man

The Working Man

The power to create, shape and manipulate has always been jealously hoarded by those who owned it, and obsessively coveted by those who sought it. This rivalry has led to many strange conflicts and customs, from the hobbled blacksmiths of Medieval times, to the guilds and secret artisans' societies of later centuries, but the core of the struggle, for those in the know, has always been about one thing and one thing only: the Archetype of the Working Man.

The Working Man does not embody skilled work as much as work itself, although the work is usually physical rather than social or mental in nature. Avatars of the Working Man gain endurance, resistance to pain and fatigue, and the ability to work at a task until it is completed, but they do so at great cost - a follower of this Archetype may never leave a task uncompleted, even if it means their own death. To do otherwise is to deviate from the path of the Archetype and to weaken the connection. Modern Working Men (and, of course, the Archetype may be channeled by either sex, especially after the boost given to female labor equality in the munition factories of the Second World War) are often carpenters, janitors, or civil engineers.

Symbols: Work clothes covered in soot, dust, or sweat are a powerful symbol of this Archetype, as are bare arms and fire.

Taboos: As mentioned above, an Avatar of the Working Man may never leave a task uncompleted. This includes tasks which have failed once, but may be re-attempted. The Avatar must work until it is impossible to continue, no matter how hazardous. 'Task', in the sense it is used here, is typically a physical project or objective, although other important actions may qualify.

Suspected Avatars in History: History is full of mythical and semi-mythical craftsman figures, most of whom have passed into legend as Hephaestus, Vulcan, and Paul Bunyan. However, serious analysis of recent contenders for this Archetype points most strongly to 'Schmidt', the Dutch factory worker whose tireless and efficient work allowed Frederick W. Taylor to write his *Principles of Scientific Management* in 1910, a book which went on to become the foundation of all operation-management disciplines.

Channels:

1-50: At this level, the Working Man gains the ability to work on after others have fallen, unconscious, at their benches. Whenever the Avatar would normally gain an exhaustion penalty from sleep deprivation, intoxication, or some other factor, they may roll against their Avatar: Working Man skill. If successful, they gain as many hours' respite as the tens digit of their skill. After this point, they gain the exhaustion penalty as usual, but they may roll this skill again when the next penalty is applied, and so on, until they fail the roll; after this point, they get fatigued at the normal rate and must rest before using this channel again. A Working Man never takes penalties to his or her Avatar skill due to fatigue, pain, or exhaustion.

51-70: A Working Man with this level takes no penalties due to environmental factors (darkness, rain, heat, cold, etc.). This only applies to actions falling within the domain of this avatar; thus, operation skills (like Driving) or craft/repair skills (like Carpentry or First Aid) are safe, but 'ethereal' skills like Charm or those skills which don't *create* anything (like Shoot from the Hip) take the penalty as usual.

71-90: At this level, the Working Man's fists strike with the power of sledgehammers. The Avatar may add the *sum* of the two digits of his or her Avatar: Working Man skill to all bare-handed melee attack damage. Alternately, any tool (hammer, hoe, spade) wielded in combat does +9 damage, and is thus capable of doing firearm-style damage on a matched result.

91+: This channel grants the Working Man the ability to work at a task until it is completed, free of any constraints but elapsed time. Put another way: if a Working Man performs an action which fails, and it falls within the territory of this Avatar (see the 51-70 channel for details), they may immediately re-roll the failed check, and keep on re-rolling until they succeed or roll higher than their Avatar: Working Man skill. If any roll is higher than their Avatar skill, the action fails. In combat, these re-rolls happen (and take effect) after everyone else has acted. Out of combat, these rerolls may also take up some time; a rough guide (which should be modified depending on the circumstances) is that every reroll represents an extra 20% of the time required to complete the task.

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The Schoolyard

Anglomancy

Pictomancy

Pictomancy: The Power of Images

Definitions aside, Pictomancy isn't a fully-fledged school of magick - yet. While it has many of the elements necessary for that status (the contradiction of art and not-art, obsession, transactionality, and obedience), it is still in an embryonic stage as far as formulaic study and definition go, simply because few Pictomancers have the occult training to expand their natural, quirky, talents into something which can be taught to others. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage; the primary advantage is that Pictomancy can be adopted alongside another school of magick, while the disadvantages are that such an association tends to drive the user insane over time, and that Pictomantic effects are costly in terms of charges and very limited in application. Most Pictomancers are urban graffiti artists; however, there is nothing to prevent their

magick from operating in a rural environment.

Pictomancers gain charges through the creation of visual art - tags, murals, mosaics, and the like (not computer-generated or artificial images such as photographs). The charges gained are, in turn, expended through the creation of other, magickally active, images. These images are treated as artifacts, in that they embody a certain effect and have a specified duration or life span. Pictomancers cannot create their art in any medium that they own or have a direct or indirect claim on; their art must be created in secret, but must always stand revealed once completed - private spellcasting is an anathema to this school. Pictomancers are known as **rune taggers** in the occult underground.

Blast style:

Pictomancers use a similar blast to Urbanomancers; the victim is damaged by a seemingly random outpouring of violence from their immediate environment - a flowerpot dropped from a high ledge, a swerving car, or a gas main explosion. However, the effect is generally weak and costly (see Blood Tag, below).

Generate a minor charge:

Create an item of art in keeping with the general guidelines of the school - a graffiti tag or small mural. The image may be abstract or representative, but it must be recognizable for what it is - hence, it must look like a consciously created image rather than a random paint splatter. The image should be approximately five square meters in size, and will require between fifteen minutes and an hour to create. The image must be seen by at least ten people before it yields a charge. If the image is removed or painted over before you spend the charge, you lose the charge.

Generate a significant charge:

As for a minor charge, but the image must be much larger - between fifty and one hundred square meters - and must be seen by one hundred people before it yields its charge. An entire train car or alleyway would suffice. The image must bear your mark, signature, or pseudonym. An image of this size requires at least an hour to create, but may require much longer if a specific subject is to be depicted (roll a die, and add one - that's how long it takes).

Generate a major charge:

As for a significant charge, but the image must be seen by at least one million people (either live or via the media) before it yields a charge, and must bear your full and recognizable given name. If you change your name before using the charge, you lose it.

Taboos:

Creating an image for any reason except the gaining or expenditure of charges causes the tagger to lose all their charges. Writing is safe, but a smiley face, an arrow, or any symbol grounds them out, irrespective of the medium in which it appears. Similarly, a

tagger may only deface, obscure, or paint over a symbol or piece of art if they replace it with an image of their own; anything else (like whitewashing a tagged wall) is taboo.

Random magick domains:

Pictomancy has no random magic domain - all its effects are created through the handful of formulaic spells detailed below. Hypothetically, should the school ever mature, its random magickal domain would be phenomenally broad - if something can be depicted, it can be caused to happen. This, of course, cancels out any 'invisible' effects.

Starting charges:

A fresh-off-the-rack rune tagger has two minor charges.

Pictomancy Effect Durations:

When a tagger casts a spell, use the artifact rules to determine the number of uses the image has. 'Uses' can be interpreted as 'life span' or 'charges' - thus, a tagger who creates an effect with seven uses can either have it affect everyone who sees it for seven days, or the first seven people to see it. The image can, at the tagger's discretion, be targeted at a specific person or group of persons; in this case, it must be of a form or contain images, writing, or symbology which would only be recognized as meaningful by that person or group. A 'life span' image can affect any given target every time they view the image (although at least an hour must pass between viewings); a 'charge' image can only affect them once.

***Example:** Steffi is a Pictomancer who has been having some trouble with a group of ancient Irish ghouls stalking her neighborhood. She spends an evening putting a Blood Tag up on the wall of her hideout; she incorporates (after some research) several appropriate phrases written in Gaelic into the image, spends her charges, and succeeds in her Pictomancy roll with a 42. Now, this would let her create an image with 6 'uses' (4+2); she decides that she wants it to be active for six days rather than just affecting the first six targets to see it. The Blood Tag will affect anyone who can read Gaelic who sees it, once per day, for the next six days.*

Pictomancy alongside another School:

Pictomancy, in its current form, only has to be a character's Obsession skill if they don't have an existing magickal school to obsess about. Adepts who pick up some Pictomantic techniques need to make an Unnatural stress check of a rank equal to the highest digit in their Pictomancy skill roll each time they cast a tagger spell. Practitioners of schools of magick which have some overlap with Pictomancy (most notably Personamancy and Iconomancy) can halve the rank of this stress check, rounding up. If Pictomancy ever gains full school status, this benefit will be lost, and practitioners will take a Failed notch every time they cast a spell in addition to the results of their stress check.

Pictomancy Minor Formula Skills:

By **Their** **Tags** **Will** **You** **Know** **Them**
Cost: 2 minor charges

This effect is produced by including some kind of personal representation into a piece of art - a rough self-portrait will do, although more subtle techniques are also used. As long as the image remains active, the Pictomancer can draw mystic energies into his or her own very identity. People who have never met them will find them familiar; people who know them, but haven't seen them in a while, will suddenly call them up or drop them an e-mail. This effect provides a +10 shift to any social skill uses for the Pictomancer for the duration, plus an additional +10 for each extra *significant* charge dumped into the spell. Note that the targets of this effect need not have seen the mystical image which is holding the spell.

Street **Scene**
Cost: 2 minor charges

This spell allows the tagger to mess with probabilities within visual range of one a specially prepared image. The image created must depict an activity or procedure - anything from a boy scout rally to a drive-by shooting. While the spell is active, all participants in a scene of that type within visual range of the image gain a modifier towards any attempts to engage in the activities it portrays. This bonus can take two forms, depending on whether the activity in question is depicted as being successful or unsuccessful in the image, but generally involves substituting the Pictomancer's magick skill for one of their own skills. If the activity is depicted as having been *unsuccessful*, the targets use the new total or their existing skill, whichever is *lower*; if the activity is depicted as having been *successful*, the targets use whichever is *higher*. This general effect may be modified depending on the exact events portrayed; if the Pictomancer is not trying to affect directed actions but rather the results of actions, results should be appropriately flip-flopped in the appropriate direction instead. Each Street Scene can only affect one activity, although there is no restriction on overlapping multiple images as long as there is an unbroken line-of-sight to all of them.

Example: Steffi creates two Street Scenes on opposite sides of the street in which she plans to ambush her enemies. One depicts a vampire being staked, and is entitled 'Just Plain Buff'; the other shows a young woman standing unarmed in a silhouette of bullet-holes, and is entitled 'Bulletproof'. When the showdown occurs, anyone attempting to drive a stake through someone else gets to use Steffi's Pictomancy skill instead of their own 'Drive a Splintery Piece of Wood Into Your Chest' skill (or whatever skill they would normally use); in addition, anyone who takes bullet damage can flip-flop the damage dealt and take the lower value.

Where **You** **At?**
Cost: 2 minor charges

This spell requires that a representation of the spell's subject be worked into it somehow (following the guidelines mentioned previously, this can be abstract or a true portrait). For the duration of the spell, anyone who closes their eyes and places a hand against the image gets a brief visual image of the building or area which the subject is presently occupying. This image is a 'street-level' view - the point of view is that of someone just outside the area or building, not inside it, so it won't help with providing an exact location for the subject.

Pictomancy Significant Formula Skills:

Blood **Tag**
Cost: 2 significant charges

This is the Pictomancer blast spell. However, it only does minor-blast damage unless the target is actually depicted in the image in a recognizable form. So, a general ward using a Blood Tag would only deal out martial arts-style damage, whereas a specific ward against someone whose likeness appeared in the image would do firearm-style damage. In either case, the image must depict the occurrence of an appropriately damaging or hazardous event - although this is not necessarily the route that the blast will take to inflict its damage.

Spreading **Love**
Cost: 1 significant charge

This is as close as Pictomantic magick gets to long-distance effects. By creating a magickal image and then successfully casting this spell, the tagger imbues the image with limited powers of movement. The image can move along the surface it was created on at walking pace, and even flow over obstructions or right angles to enable it to cross a street, slither in through a window, and so on. Any final destination may be nominated, but the caster must be familiar with, or at least have line-of-sight on, this point. The image may not move while anyone but the caster is watching; if it suddenly enters someone's visual field, it will freeze until it can once again move unobserved. Like other magickal effects, visual recording devices don't count; only naked, unaided eyesight will have this effect. The image retains mobility for as many minutes as the tagger's casting roll; after this, it cannot be reanimated.

Cult **Personality**
Cost: 2 significant charges

Whether the person depicted is Tupac Shakur or Ronald Reagan, a Pictomancer using this spell has the ability to trap some of that person's character and reflect it onto anyone in visual range of the image. At casting, the tagger nominates one of the depicted person's Passions; anyone in visual range of the image begins (consciously or unconsciously) using that Passion as if it were their own, flip-flopping appropriate rolls or suffering appropriate stress checks. Note that the tagger need not have a firm idea of what the subject of the spell's Passions are (or were); he or she simply picks a feature of their personality and binds it into the spell, and that feature begins to act like a Passion for all those affected. This spell can be a useful way of divining someone's character; if the image created is focused around their Noble stimulus and everyone in the neighborhood suddenly starts building pipe bombs and skinning their household pets, it's time to pick a new subject of inquiry.

Pictomancy Major Effects:

Major effects? No-one knows - no tagger has ever held a major charge, or, if they have, no-one knows what they did with it. Speculation exists that a major charge would allow an image to become 'real' - able to step off the wall in three full dimensions and interact with reality in some unprecedented manner.

Sample Pictomancer:

Steffi 'Staph' Isandrou

Rage Stimulus: People getting away with acts of selfishness and carelessness.

Fear Stimulus: (Self) Drowning. Steffi can't swim.

Noble Stimulus: Steffi wants to deliver her neighborhood from violence and crime.

Personality: Bipolar, alternating between 'dreamy, optimistic idealist' and 'cynical street kid'.

Obsession: Getting things 'out' - whether in conversation or through an artistic medium.

Body (Healthy) 45: Struggle 25%, General Athletics 25%, Stay Real Still 25%

Mind (Always Planning) 65: Notice 40%, General Education 15%, Streetwise 30%

Speed (Deft) 60: Work Fast 20%, Dodge 55%, Shoot You Down 5%

Soul (Unfocused) 50: Lie 15%, Street Gang Contacts 5%, Charm 25%, **Pictomancy 35%**

Charges: Steffi always has a significant charge up her sleeve, and 1-4 minor charges.

Gear: Pushbike, 5 aerosol cans, facemask, reversible windbreaker, chemical spray, .22 automatic

Madness Meter

Violence	Isolation	Self	Helplessness	The Unnatural
2 Hard	0 Hard	0 Hard	0 Hard	2 Hard
1 Failed	0 Failed	1 Failed	1 Failed	1 Failed

History: Steffi's a junior member of a 'good' magickal cabal which calls itself the Third Eye of Atlantic City, who encountered her in the course of their unsuccessful attempts to crack an abduction ring operating in the immigrant community of some of the city's poorer areas. Despite her youth (19), she had been conducting occult vigilante actions in the area for some time, after seeing her mother torn to pieces by a swarm of glowing, bat-like shapes one night several years ago. Third Eye took her under their wing, offering to help her develop her fragile magickal skills into a more effective weapon, while at the same time hoping to learn as much about conventional, street-level vigilante operations from her as possible (Third Eye are a collection of soccer moms from the suburbs, whose few successes have been attributable to their determination and inventiveness rather than their combat or investigative skills - a deficiency they intend to correct).

Some members of Third Eye have, amusingly enough, begun to learn Pictomancy from Steffi; their efforts to integrate her bare-bones street magick with existing magickal techniques (mostly back-engineered shamanic stuff from American Indian and Aboriginal culture) may, in time, provide Pictomancy with the necessary magickal depth to become a fully-fledged school.