

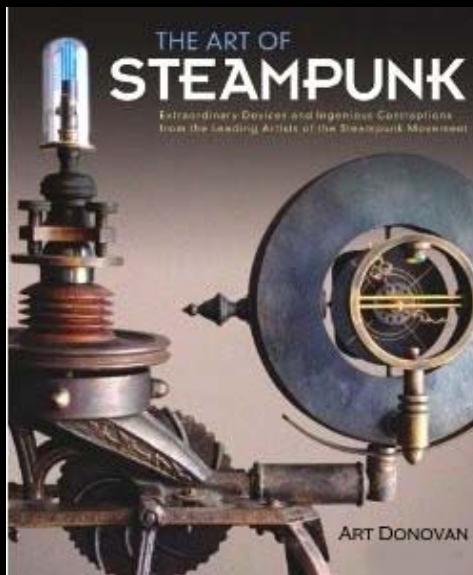
# Steampunk: Steam-powered Art



What is Steampunk, anyway?

It's a writing, art, fashion and design genre that combines the romantic Victorian age with the steam-powered technology of the industrial revolution.

It became popular in the 1980's and early 1990's. It is currently enjoying a resurgence.



The term "steampunk" was coined by author K.W. Jeter when he was looking for a term to describe stories set in a 19th century time period with mechanical elements similar to H.G. Wells' The Time Machine & 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea by Jules Verne.



## The World of "Steampunk"



mpunk fashion is concerned with detail,  
quality and color

Inspired by writers and thinkers such as Jules Verne and HG Wells, *Steampunk* is a genre on the rise. And while the word in itself conjures up a feeling, and perhaps an idea, it is tough to nail down exactly what the movement is.

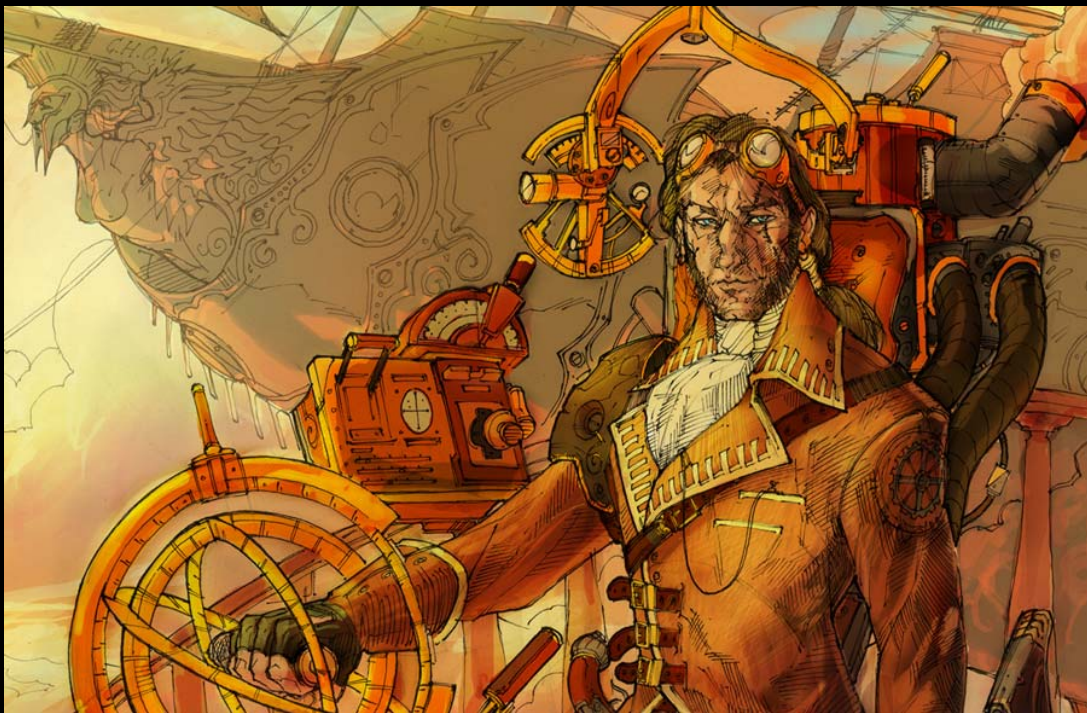
*The short answer:*

*Steampunk is a genre, a design aesthetic, and a philosophy.*

Originally, Steampunk was a literary genre that began in the 1980s and blended science fiction with fantasy and included social and technological aspects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (such as steam) with some deconstruction and reimagining of (or rebellion against) parts of it—hence the “punk.” Yet the genre is poorly defined, and Steampunk can be any of the following:



- Takes place in the Victorian era but includes advanced machines based on 19th century technology (e.g. *The Difference Engine* by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling);
- Includes the supernatural (e.g. *The Parasol Protectorate* by Gail Carriger);
- Includes the supernatural and foregoes the technology (e.g. *The Anubis Gates* by Tim Powers, one of the works that inspired the term ‘Steampunk’);
- Includes the advanced machines, but takes place later than the Victorian period, thereby assuming that the predomination by electricity and petroleum never happened (e.g. *The Peshawar Lancers* by S. M. Stirling); or
- Takes place in another world altogether, but features Victorian-like technology (e.g. *Mainspring* by Jay Lake).



Time travel, futurism, dirigibles, steam & spring power, gears & vintage machinery are all part of the steampunk image.





# THE STEAMPUNK AESTHETIC: Retrofuturism Technofantasy Neo-Victorianism

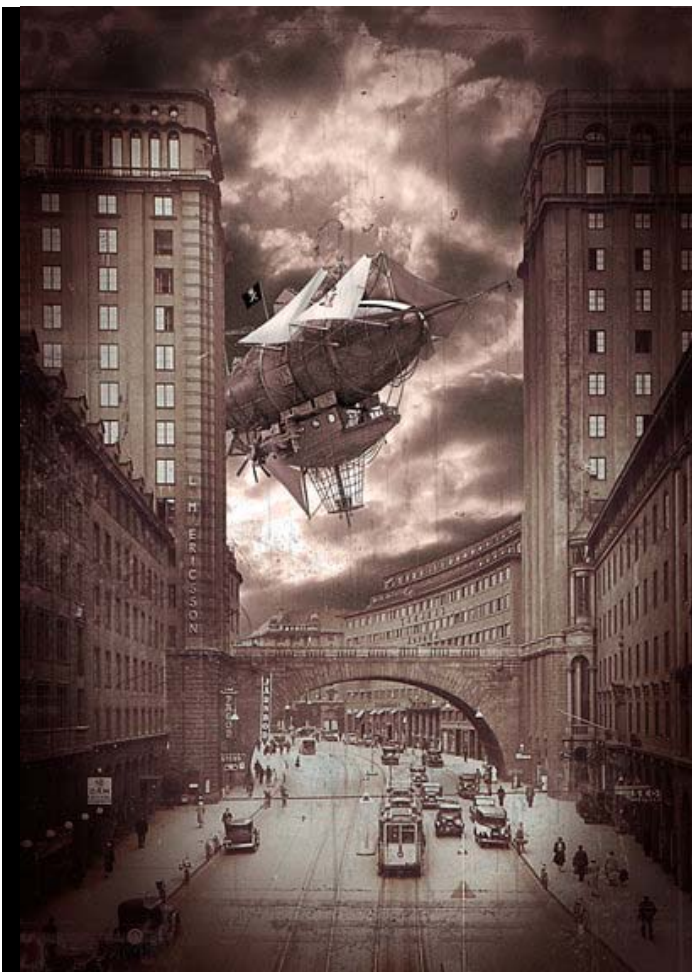
*Retrofuturism:* "THE USE OF A STYLE OR AESTHETIC CONSIDERED FUTURISTIC IN AN EARLIER ERA." (OED)

NOSTALGIA AND REGRET ARE "TYPICAL RETROFUTURIST EMOTIONS" (LATHAM 341). NOSTALGIA IS COMMONLY CONSIDERED A MOTIVATION FOR STEAMPUNK INTEREST.

STEAMPUNKS SEE MODERN TECHNOLOGY AS OFFENSIVELY IMPERMEABLE TO THE EVERYDAY PERSON, AND DESIRE TO RETURN TO AN AGE WHEN, THEY BELIEVE, MACHINES WERE VISIBLE, HUMAN, FALLIBLE, AND ABOVE ALL, ACCESSIBLE" (ONION 145 ITALICS MINE).







Since the 1990's  
the steampunk genre  
has expanded  
beyond recognizable  
historical periods  
to works set in  
fantasy worlds  
where steam- or  
spring-powered  
technology is used.

"HMS Ophelia" by Delen  
on deviantart.com

## "Steampunk Sisters"

by  
Ingrid Pomeroy  
Digital art



# "Girl With Pocket Watch"

by  
Ingrid Pomeroy  
Digital art



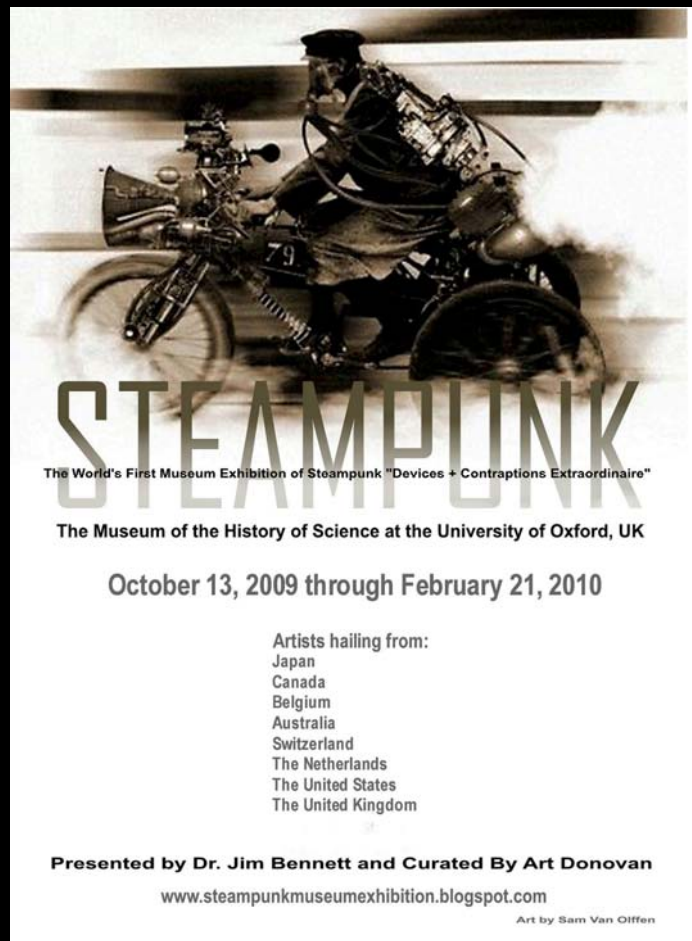
# "Steampunk Toddler"

by  
Ingrid Pomeroy  
Digital art



The first ever Steampunk art exhibition was held at Oxford University. It was the highest attended exhibit in the history of the museum.

A U.S. artist named Art Donovan was the curator for the event.



"The Electric Skull" by Art Donovan



"Steampunk  
Tripod Floor  
Lamp"

by  
Art Donovan

Photograph by  
Sam Van Olffen



STEPHANE HALLEUX- BELGIUM







AMANDA SCRIVENER- U.K.

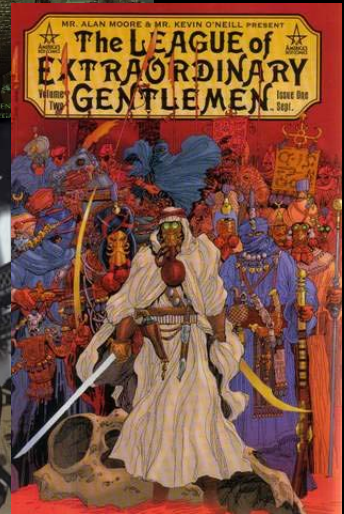
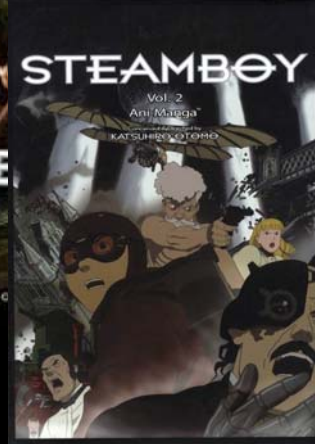


THOMAS D. WILLEFORD- U.K.

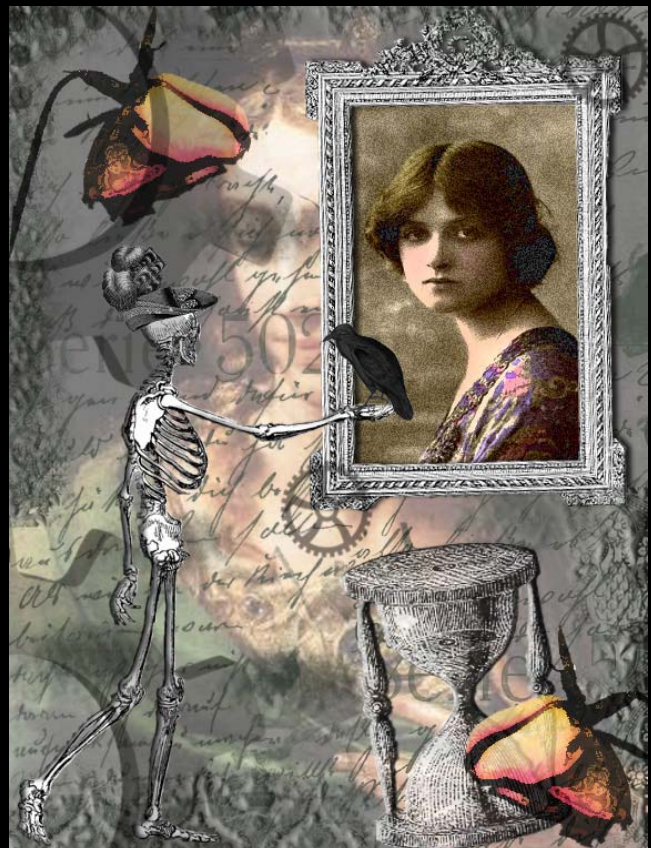


"The Ferryman  
Lamp" by  
Art Donovan

Steampunk has found its way into movies and comics, too.



The edgy, historical/futuristic, romantic and mechanical style of Steampunk lends itself well to motivational class lessons in Literature, Creative Writing, History, Science and Art.



Digital art by Morgan, MHS 9th gr.





## Steampunk Fashion



How about a steam-powered guitar?





Steampunk jewelry often utilizes watch parts and gears.

Items can be attached with glue.



Steampunk collage can incorporate many different items. They must work together to create a good composition. What kind of balance did the artist use in this work?



Fairy tale themes are sometimes used in Steampunk, or stories are “steampunked” when an artist draws illustrations for the book in the steam-punk style.

Which figure do you think is the emphasis in this picture?



A classic artwork like the Mona Lisa can even be steampunked.

# “Tea Time” (A Steampunk Short Film)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZa4Dh\\_Ay9A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZa4Dh_Ay9A)

## Resources:

Jean Campbell, *Steampunk Style Jewelry*, 2009

[artdonovan.typepad.com](http://artdonovan.typepad.com)

[clker.com](http://clker.com)

[deviantart.com](http://deviantart.com)

[freevectors.net](http://freevectors.net)

[graphicsfairy.blogspot.com](http://graphicsfairy.blogspot.com) (great for free images)

[keepdesigning.com](http://keepdesigning.com)

[ribbonrail.com](http://ribbonrail.com)

[steampunkmuseumexhibition.blogspot.com](http://steampunkmuseumexhibition.blogspot.com)

[steampunkscholar.blogspot.com](http://steampunkscholar.blogspot.com)

[trendhunter.com](http://trendhunter.com) (Art& Design tab, Pro Trends)

[vintageprintable.com](http://vintageprintable.com)

For Photoshop lessons for beginners:

[mmerchant.us/class](http://mmerchant.us/class) work

(great handbook)