



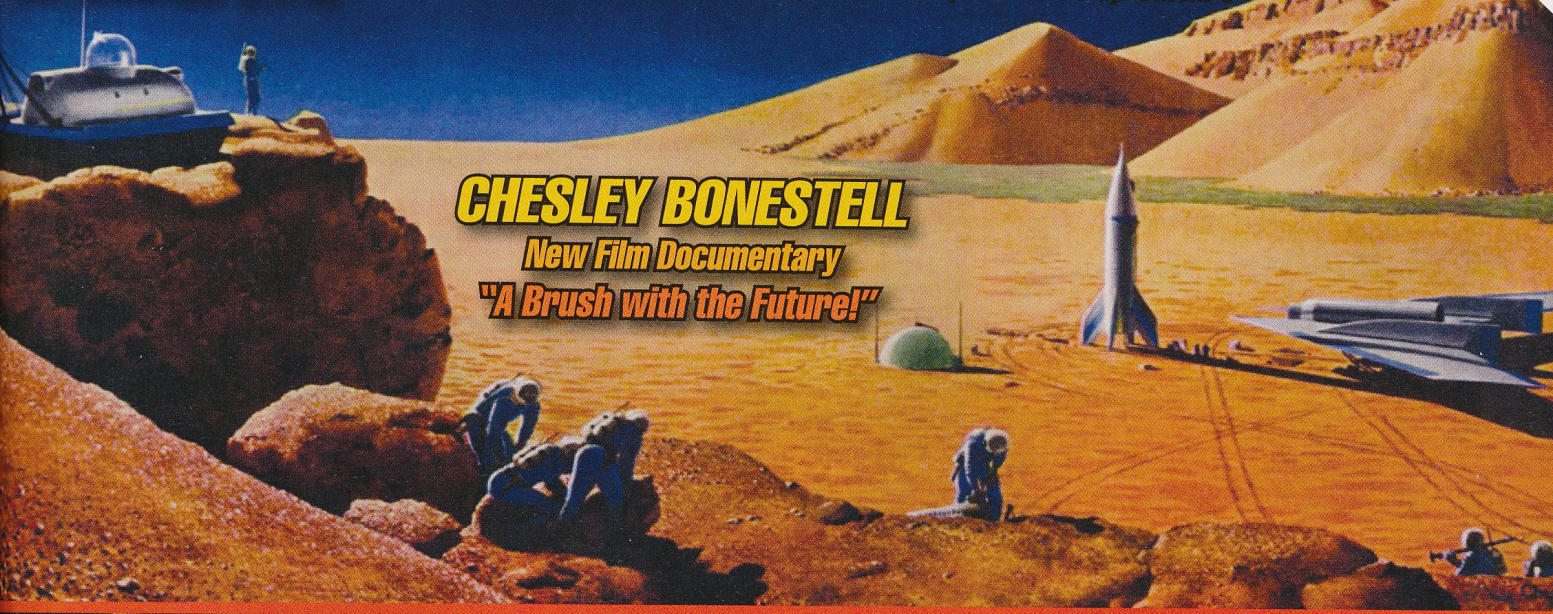
# FILMFAX PLUS

A Five Ounce Ton of Intelligent Fun!

Marvel's  
**STAN LEE**  
Remembered!

**THE DEATH RAY (Pt. 6)**

The Magazine of Unusual Film, Television, & Retro Pop Culture



## CHESLEY BONESTELL

New Film Documentary  
*"A Brush with the Future!"*

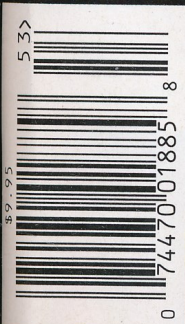


**BONESTELL'S**  
Visionary Influence on  
Science Fiction Cinema!

**DESTINATION  
MOON**

TECHNICOLOR

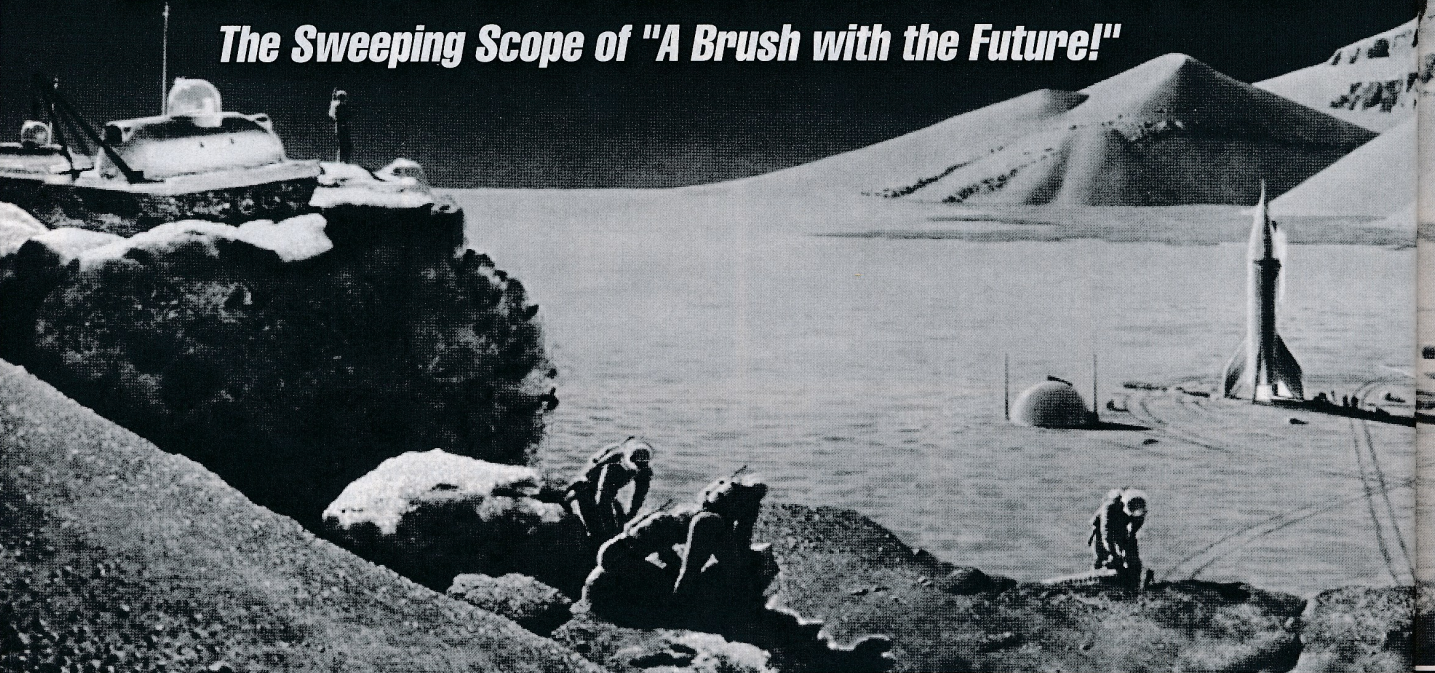
Jan.-March 2019  
FILMFAX PLUS No. 153



**Child Star PAT CARDI on '60s SF Sitcom "It's About Time" ◊ MONSTERS! MONSTERS! EVERYWHERE! Behind-the-Scenes with All Your Favorite Fiends! ◊ RAD FULTON: From '60s Teen Juvie JOY RIDE to TV's WILD, WILD WEST! ◊ ED WOOD's Porno Novels & Sexploitation Films! ◊ HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS: A Bloody Good Interview! (Pt. 2)**

# CHESLEY BONESTELL REVISTED

The Sweeping Scope of "A Brush with the Future!"



Article and Interview by DON VAUGHAN

**M**ORE THAN THREE DECADES AFTER HIS DEATH IN 1986, Chesley Bonestell remains one of the most important and influential astronomical artists ever to put paint to canvas. In the years following World War II, his many paintings of distant planetscapes, gleaming spaceships, and brave space explorers helped promote America's nascent space program, and inspired countless scientists and astronauts to reach for the stars. However, Bonestell's accomplishments went much further. Trained as an architect, he was influential in the design and construction of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the Chrysler Building in New York, and many other important structures that continue to inspire and impress. In Hollywood, he quickly became one of the film industry's premiere matte painters, working on classic motion pictures like *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939), *Citizen Kane* (1941), *Destination Moon* (1950), and *Conquest of Space* (1955).

Amazingly, no one ever made a documentary about Bonestell's life and career. Producer Douglass Stewart remedied that with *Chesley Bonestell: A Brush with the Future*, which premiered on May 2018 at the Newport Beach Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award for Art, Architecture, and Design. *Filmfax/Outré* talked

with Stewart about his fascination with Bonestell, the challenges of producing *Chesley Bonestell: A Brush with the Future*, and why Bonestell remains an important figure in art and science today.

**OUTRÉ:** You have quite a group of people in your film. Tell us about them.

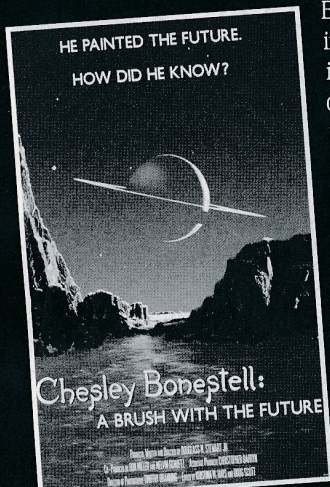
**STEWART:** Chesley Bonestell is no longer alive but we have wonderful rare footage of him in the film. We also have commentary by the late Ray Bradbury shot many years ago by producer Arnold Leibovit. There's even a quote about Chesley by the director of *Destination Moon*, Irving Pichel. There are many interviews shot directly for this film that include Douglas Trumbull, and perspectives by *Star Wars* (1977) veterans Ben Burt, Craig Barron, and Richard Edlund. Also space artists like David Aguilar, Don Davis (mentioned by Chesley), and author Wyn Wachhorst. Plus astronomers like Dr. Lucianne Walkowicz and there's a special section by Irene Edwards, editor-in-chief of *Sunset* magazine. Chesley was a contributor to *Sunset* when he was working there as a teenager.

**OUTRÉ:** What is your connection to Chesley Bonestell? Why is he important to you personally? Were you able to meet Bonestell before his passing in 1986?

**STEWART:** No, I never met Chesley Bonestell. As a young man, I saw his paintings in science fiction magazines and on book covers. There is something just absolutely unforgettable about his images, and that's why they're so influential. I always thought, being in show business, surely someone has made a film about Chesley Bonestell, ⇒



Bonestell in front of one of his Moon dioramas.



Promotional art for the new Chesley Bonestell documentary.



*Left, across top: One of Chesley Bonestell's amazing paintings from Wernher von Braun and Willy Ley's 1956 space science book *The Exploration of Mars*. Above: A young visitor to the Boston Museum of Science studies the 40-foot mural of the moon painted by Bonestell (Oct. 26, 1967). Below: Wernher von Braun in a room full of Bonestell paintings, many of which illustrated his and Willy Ley's space exploration books.*





From left: Two books by Hugh Downs-winning author Paul Miller (center) and Paul Zucker, Jr. documenting Chesley Bonestell's art. Walter Schmitt depicts the original Bonestell painting "Saturn Seen from Titan." Zucker's book & Chesley Bonestell Space Art Chronology featured the Collier's March 22, 1952 cover

I just put the idea on a shelf. Then, when I had the time, I thought, you know, I haven't seen any films about Bonestell, so I began researching this in 2014. I came across a

Space Art Chronology. I met Walter in person last December when I shot the feature film for the Bonestell 2015 in West Troy, Missouri. There, the day started

his artwork. Were there any individuals you really wanted to interview but weren't able to? STEWARD: It would have been wonderful to interview Chesley himself because he had

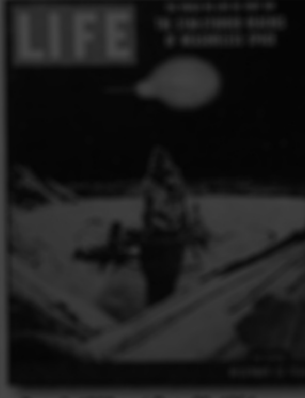
# The rest of the article can be found in the Jan-Mar 2019 issue of Filmfax magazine

To obtain a copy of this issue or to subscribe to Filmfax, call 847-866-7155, e-mail [filmfax@hotmail.com](mailto:filmfax@hotmail.com), or write to:

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Evanston, IL 60204

Looking back, what were the greatest challenges you faced in making the documentary?

STEWARD: The challenge of getting Chesley's story to an hour and a half. Chesley's life is an amazing one. Almost from the beginning he was involved in education and things that became important teach-



From left: Collier's covers featuring Bonestell artwork from June 27, 1952 and March 22, 1952. Life covers by Bonestell from Dec. 4, 1952 and Dec. 22, 1954