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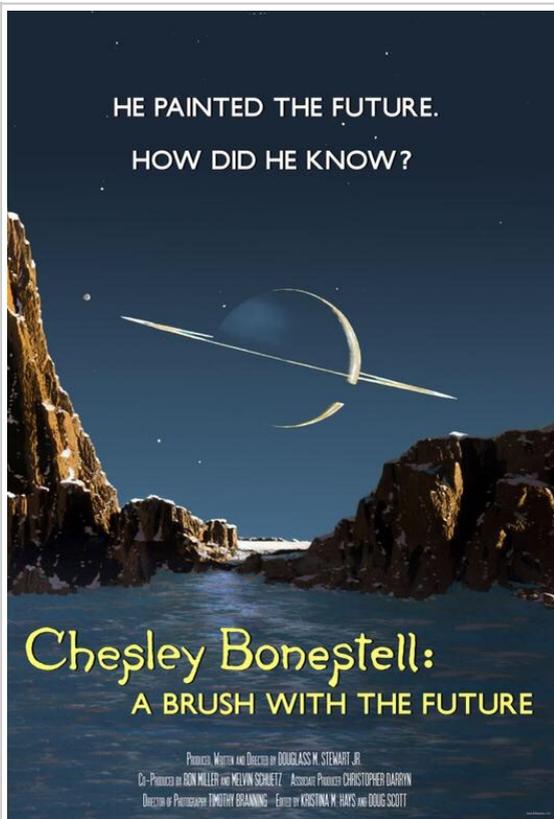
New documentary celebrates the ground-breaking SF art of Chesley Bonestell

📅 August 10, 2018 👤 John Freeman 👁 351 Views 💬 0 Comments



Art by Chelsey Bonestell, used to publicise Chelsey Bonestell: A Brush With The Future. Image: Bonestell LLC

Long before satellites would journey to planets and deep-space telescopes would photograph distant galaxies, there was an artist whose prescient vistas dazzled the eyes and the imagination of all who beheld them. His name was **Chesley Bonestell**. How could he see so far in the future?



The poster for Chesley Bonestell: A Brush With The Future utilises one of Bonestell's most memorable images, a view of Saturn from Titan, conjured for Life magazine in 1944

Chesley Bonestell: A Brush With The Future is a new documentary that explores that question and has already attracted a lot of attention from fans of the artist's work. The film had its premiere back in May at the Newport Beach Film Festival in the United States, and was honoured with the Audience Award for the category of Art, Architecture and Design.

The film also recently won Best Documentary award at the 2018 Comic-Con International Independent Film Festival.

Despite his astonishing work portraying the future – he first sprang to instant fame with his art published in *Life* magazine in 1944 – Bonestell, who died in 1986, with an unfinished canvas on his easel,

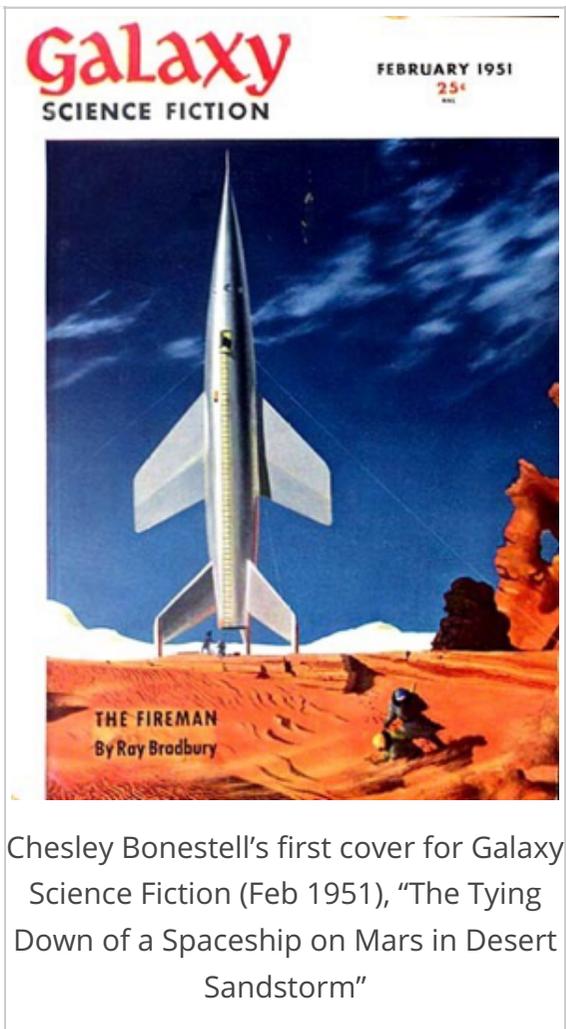
is little remembered today, except by hardcore science fiction fans and those scientists whose dreams of exploring the cosmos were first inspired by Bonestell's astonishingly accurate representations.

A Brush With The Future aims to introduce Bonestell to contemporary audiences and remind the world of his remarkable accomplishments, which include helping get the Golden Gate Bridge built, creating matte paintings for numerous Hollywood films, including *Destination Moon*, and the 1953 *War of the Worlds*, promoting America's nascent space program, and more.

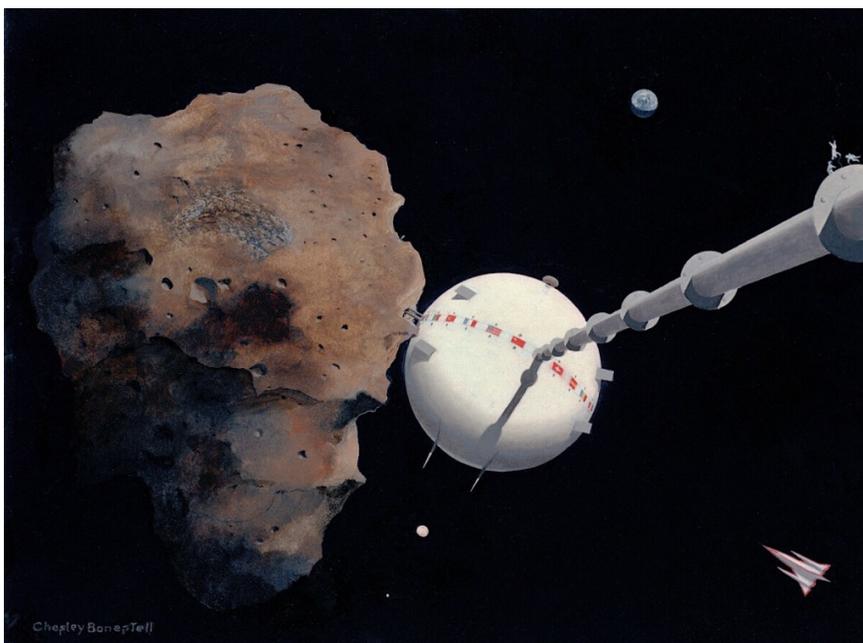
Bonestell combined his artistic ability with a deep understanding of architectural design, creating renderings that helped lay people easily comprehend even the most complex of structures. It was a talent that is in evidence in his work with scientists such as Wernher von Braun when designing realistic space ships, space stations, and other futuristic hardware.

His work has appeared in numerous books, starting with a collection of his early work, *The Conquest of Space*, in 1949, and he was deservedly honoured

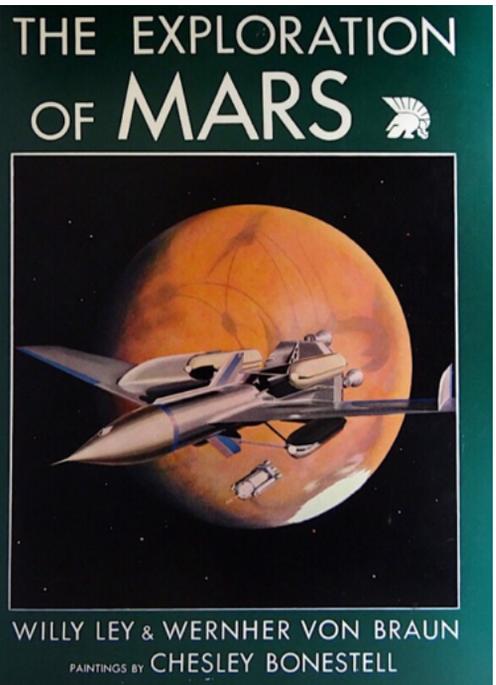
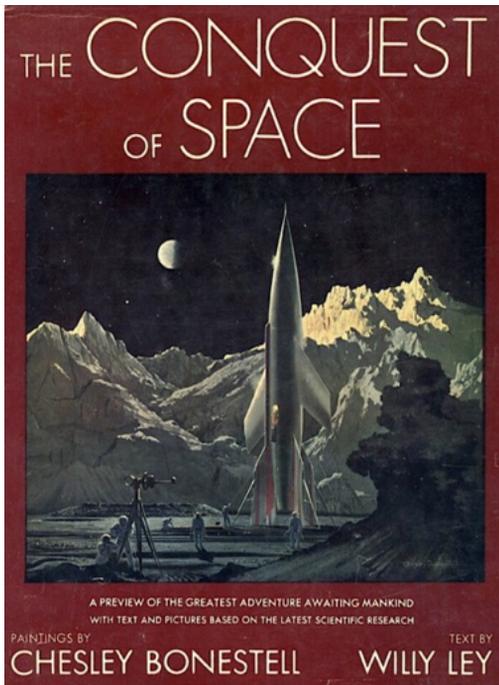
for his art through his lifetime, including by the **British Interplanetary Society**. The **Science Fiction Hall of Fame** inducted Bonestell in 2005, the first year it considered non-literary contributors.



Chesley Bonestell's first cover for Galaxy Science Fiction (Feb 1951), "The Tying Down of a Spaceship on Mars in Desert Sandstorm"



Art by Chesley Bonestell, used to publicise Chesley Bonestell: A Brush With The Future. Image: Bonestell LLC



His paintings are prized by collectors and institutions such as the National Air and Space Museum and the National Collection of Fine Arts. One of his classic paintings, an ethereally beautiful image of Saturn seen from its giant moon Titan, used in the poster for the new film, has been called “the painting that launched a thousand careers.”

Wernher von Braun wrote that he had “learned to respect, nay fear, this wonderful artist’s obsession with perfection. My file cabinet is filled with sketches of rocket ships I had prepared to help in his artwork – only to have them returned to me with... blistering criticism.”

“I had always assumed that one day, somebody would make a film about him,” notes Douglass M. Stewart, Jr., the Producer, Director and Writer of the new film. “Seemed like a natural. Years went by and several years ago, I decided to do some research. Intuitively, it had a hunch that there could be an interesting story behind Chesley and his paintings ...why not make a film about him?”

“Chesley Bonestell was the future, and still is the future,” Douglass **told Printmag in an extensive interview about the film**, which also includes a huge number of examples of his work. “He had a remarkable way of peering forward in time and putting what he saw down on canvas.

“... Everything that Bonestell did can be traced back to his architectural background. The combination of architectural and artistic skills was a melding of the divine gifts he was blessed with. The results were astounding.”

- Find out more about *Chesley Bonestell: A Brush With The Future* at **www.chesleybonestell.com**
- Chesley Bonestell's work and details of how to license its use can be found here **www.bonestell.org**



John Freeman

The founder of downthetubes, John describes himself as is a "freelance comics operative", working as an editor, as Creative Consultant on the Dan Dare audio adventures for B7 Media, and on promotional work for the Lakes International Comic Art Festival. John has worked in British comics publishing for over 30 years. His credits include editor of titles such as Doctor Who Magazine at Marvel UK and Star Trek Magazine and Babylon 5 Magazine at Titan Magazines. He also edited STRIP Magazine and edited several audio comics for ROK Comics, including Team M.O.B.I.L.E. and The Beatles Story. He has also edited several comic collections, including volumes of "Charley's War" and "Dan Dare" for Tian Books. He's the writer of "Crucible", a creator-owned project with 2000AD artist Smuzz, published on Tapastic; and "Death Duty" and "Skow Dogs" with Dave Hailwood for digital comic 100% Biodegradable.