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UVI Student to Release First Comic Book, “The Mortal Pulse,” Set in the U.S. Virgin Islands

Devon Pelle, an English and Fine Arts student at UVI, is preparing to publish his debut comic, “The Mortal Pulse.” The story, inspired by Pelle’s love for art and his Caribbean roots, explores the emergence of individuals with powerful mental abilities.

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“The Mortal Pulse”, a comic book set in the U.S. Virgin Islands, will be available to the reading public in the coming months. The publication is the first for Devon Pelle, a second-year English and Fine Arts student at the University of the Virgin Islands. The comic book is written and illustrated by Mr. Pelle, under his nom de plume [“Guzbez.”](#)

“I loved drawing and art longer than I can remember,” Mr. Pelle told the Consortium on Thursday. “Growing up watching cartoons and reading comics, I had my own overactive imagination.” He always wanted to make stories himself, he said. Now, he has.

“The Mortal Pulse” is a “21st-century narrative of the birth of a new kind of human with powerful mental abilities, but who lack proper guidance,” Mr. Pelle disclosed. “With time, they become disruptive — until a mute boy with telepathic abilities from the U.S. Virgin Islands strikes up an intense friendship in a girl’s dream.” The story continues to take shape after “a chance real-world encounter threatens to expose less idealized versions of themselves,” the young artist outlined.

Mr. Pelle began working on the comic while he lived in Atlanta, a period which he said made him incredibly homesick. “I wasn’t there when Irma and Maria [hit]. I wasn’t there for the rebuilding. I wasn’t there to be with my family...Setting it in the Virgin Islands helped me put my mind there more,” he told the Consortium. “It gave me an opportunity to look up history and allowed me to expose [friends] to the Virgin Islands. I think this is the best part about making the comic and publishing it; it’s easier for me to share the Virgin Islands with people.”

Though the book’s release is scheduled for March or April, Mr. Pelle says public reactions to early versions have been positive. He reports “a lot of curiosity because there’s a dearth of comics [about the territory]. People are trying to imagine what a Virgin Islands comic would look like.”

Comic books and graphic novels are not particularly common in contemporary Caribbean literature, despite the increasing popularity of manga, a Japanese comic book style. According to Mr. Pelle, “It’s not for a lack of talent.” “We have so many amazing writers and artists here,” he observed, suggesting that others who are interested in publishing similar work should “study under the masters to find out how it’s done exactly.” He credits the Cartoonist Kayfabe podcast for providing him with knowledge and guidance.

Since word of “The Mortal Pulse” entered the public domain, Mr. Pelle says he has connected with other local artists and plans to share the insights gained during his own production and publishing process. “I love reading comics, and I love the Virgin Islands. I would love to read more comics about our region, our culture, and our way of life.” He is hopeful for “more avenues of expression” in the territory.

“I hope that [the comic] is encouraging for artists and creatives and people who want to try something new. Often we imagine failure when we’re supposed to be imagining success,” Mr. Pelle reminded the public.