Jarvis opens up his *Manifesto of Digital Art* (http://www.dunkingbirdproductions.com/pages/article1.html) with a quote from Filippo Marinetti, founder of the Italian futurists in the early 20th century. Radicals in their day, the futurists embraced technology, speed, and dynamism. “With all this expensive equipment around, a digital artist can never claim to be a ‘starving artist,’” Jarvis declared via email. “I refuse to accept that mythology, even if it means working for a living. But, I find so much of the art today (blame it on post-modernism) lacking in passion and heart. Lots of irony and sarcasm there, which are good things; but, by definition not things you get passionate about. So, the futurists were loaded with passion, if nothing else they had heart.”

Modeling his diatribe after the original futurist manifestos, Jarvis loves the idea of art meaning so much that a fistfight breaks out at an exhibit, with people arguing about art, and feeling and living its importance. “I modeled [the manifesto] after what I thought Marinetti would have said,” he explained. “Besides there are a lot of traditional notions about art that must be left behind or at least questioned with the arrival of digital art making, even the sort of 2D visual digital art I make and prefer. Using digital to make art has the feel of revolution.”

**Clusters, tsunamis, and eggs**

Along with his wife, Jarvis runs a digital design and printing business called Dunking Bird Productions. *Clusters* (the cover image) is one of a set of “machine art” images he created years ago. He also delves into photo manipulation and natural media.

Letting stock Adobe Photoshop filters and Kai Power Tools lead the way, he began *Clusters* with a complex texture of colors and rhythm using several passes of those filters. KPT’s glass lens and hyper tiling filters played a big part.

“This sort of highly rendered treatment holds a lot of pleasure for my eye because it looks so photographically real and adds dimension and the suggestion of an actual object in the composition, like a single big drop of water balanced on a leaf of grass,” he explained. “My art work, even when I used to paint with more traditional media, deals with the notion of providing, in a single image, elements that look flat and 2D in one part of the composition and 3D, shaded, and even photo-real in another part of the picture plain.” It’s precisely this aspect that attracts Jarvis to the digital world. He calls his style “abstract tromp l’oeil.”

*Tsunami* (see Figure 1) and *Birth of the Egg* (see Figure 2) were created pretty much the same way, with multiple passes of multiple filters. Jarvis explained that in *Tsunami*, created long before the recent tragedy, the “claws,” which are about to engulf the red sun are “small elements that were cut from the composition and pasted several times and resized and rotated into the composition. Of course, the sun is a symbol for Japan, a country that has lived with and suffered for centuries from killer waves.”

When it comes to *Birth of the Egg*, Jarvis says this image finally answers the question of “which came first…” He used KPT’s lens glare to create the egg orbs and KPT’s turbulence filter to create the gooey frame.

*The Calling* [see Figure 3] seems to scream,” he noted. “I thought it
was a good description for both the upside and the downside of having a true calling in one's life. Something that you are driven to do, even rewarded to do and, yet, can be a source of great pain.”

**Going digital**

Jarvis earned his MFA in video and mixed media from Southern Illinois University in 1975. He and his wife were always both fine artists in the analog world before going digital about 10 years ago. He bought his first Macintosh in 1994 and the rest is history. “The art studio in a box was attractive,” he admitted. “Not having to clean brushes is great. The speed with which a train of thought can be carried out, rejected, modified, repurposed is a big selling point for me. Working digitally, the artist has a tool that works as fast as the imagination. I like the almost symbiotic relationship you can form between yourself, the computer, and the work as it develops in the moment.”

Although Jarvis cites influence from 20th-century composer John Cage’s use of chance and indeterminacy in art making, he admits that he just can’t fully consider art to be solely the process—as opposed to the final result, like Cage so humbly advocated. That is, Jarvis can’t fully remove himself from the work.

“I realized that I was too much of a sensualist to stay out of the process,” he said. “Besides, if the work means nothing more to me than a process, then how can it mean anything to the viewer of the art? So, I try to strike a balance between letting the tools do what they can do, but always, always putting myself into the work or, at the very least, understanding what the work means to me. Communication, that is, you getting the same message out of it that I do, is not important; but what is important is for me to be there.”

But he still sees digital art as revolutionary in nature. In his digital manifesto, Jarvis calls for the death of “limited editions” and suggests that the digital world should foster an environment where the artist limits his or her output based only on demand for a particular work:

“One of the things nailed into your head while attending the finer art schools is that the artist owes it to buyers, agents, and your future estate to limit your output of a certain image. The argument usually is that too many copies drives down the prices and scares off your investors. But who really profits from this? Not the artist. This is the art agents’ way of guaranteeing that after you die everyone else will profit.”

**The future holds nothing**

Jarvis says he’s working on co-authoring a book to be published by Thomson/Course Technology this summer. He won’t blow the whistle on it all, but he says the book will show, among other things, “how absolutely dependent on human input the creation of digital art is.” If it doesn’t, he says he’ll quit and go build kites or sell chestnuts.

When asked what the future holds, he explains that it “holds” nothing. “[The future] is not waiting around for us, we have to make it happen right now! I carry the futurist curse. If I lose interest in digital art, it will only be because something new that will not be widely popu-