

Recently, I went behind the scenes with Derek Garcia, fan favorite and finalist from Season 3 of SyFy Channel's Face Off. As many of you will know, Face Off is a make-up special effects competition and TV series hosted by actress McKenzie Westmore, daughter of famous SFX artist Michael Westmore. (Westmore, who is one of the most respected men in Hollywood, is best known for his work on the Star Trek series. He has made guest appearances on Face Off, lending his support and expertise to a whole new generation of artists.)

I caught up with Derek at the Spooky Empire May-Hem/Halloween Extreme Convention in Orlando, Florida. I stood to the side to watch Derek and the team apply prosthetics/make-up to clients, while Derek thought back to when his passion for this industry began. He told me that as kids, he and his twin brother, Eric Garcia, had practiced making various monster creations on each other. He also told me that his father had had a large influence on them, helping them to develop their love for art and for monster makeup as children. Derek's dad had told the boys that when he was young, he had made his own Hunchback of Notre Dame costume – using a pillow on his back for the “hunch,” and a mix of “tissue paper and latex to deform his face.” When Derek was 7 or 8 years old, he recalls his dad taking him and his brother to a show he called the Horror Make-up Show...” In the show, they talked about the FX makeup industry and showed us a few FX gags on stage. I remember thinking how cool this was and that I wanted to do what they did in that show.” The

Garcia brothers' love for creating monsters led them to careers as make-up SFX artists; they attended the Joe Blasco Make-Up Artist Training Center in Orlando, Florida and took on projects in the Orlando area. Derek refers to his time at Joe Blasco as a great experience which helped him learn his craft, and says that he feels "fortunate" for his time there.*

When the opportunity to be on Face Off came up, Derek Garcia and his brother decided to try out. After going through an extensive audition process, which included numerous make-up assignments, along with flights back and forth to California, the people at Syfy decided to cast both brothers on Season 3. From the season debut in August 2012, the talented and friendly twins were fan favorites. Both brothers were hugely successful on the show, with Derek making it all the way to the Final Three. Today, the Garcia brothers continue to collaborate on a number of projects, but each has his own unique style and sense of design. Each of the brothers has made a name for himself. Derek is also known outside of the make-up world as a highly regarded freelance tattoo artist. His special effects work brings together his talents and passion in both make-up and Ink.

As Derek, Eric, and Nix Herrera (a contestant from Season 2 of Face Off) completed their zombie creations at the convention, the only phrase that came to my mind was "out of this world." The three artists (and former contestants) now do make-up

and tour horror conventions for a company called Morphstore, which sells make up and foam latex masks. I saw a custom prosthetic face piece called a "snitch," and the detail was astonishing. Morphstore works in conjunction with Make-Up and Creative Arts, LLC., owned by make-up artist Andy Wright. (Wright, who specializes in make-up, prosthetics, props, prototypes and body art, has done work for nearly every major studio, including Disney, Lucas Films and Warner Brothers.) Already double tasking between our interview and his work, Derek was surrounded by fans who lined up eagerly to take photographs with their cell phones. His facial expression at the time revealed his humility in light of his recent notoriety. Appearing on television had nothing to do with fame, he told me; he was just "... doing what I love. I don't consider myself a celebrity."

- Derek's mentor, Bill McCoy, is a world-renowned artist and the owner of Real McCoy FX.

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