

RED AND WHITE AND NEW

Four young Norman Rockwells of the 21st century show how American editorial illustration is developing in the hands of a new generation, as they wrestle with the traditional questions surrounding commercial and personal image making.

Dire predictions of editorial illustration's death (some of them made by me) may be more delusion than reality. All you have to do is page through the current crop of American magazines to find many new names attached to numerous conceptual images. Despite a dearth of the mammoth tableau – single and double page spreads and covers were once the cornerstone of American illustration – by America's most illustrious illustrators, threats of demise have not diminished the sheer volume of young artists producing some of the most eclectic illustration ever. The work may be physically smaller in overall reproduction size but arguably illustrators today are more prodigious than a decade ago.

Many of this number are finding alternative outlets for their work – toys, games, animation,

even tableware – but having just completed a survey of over 150 mostly under twenty-something illustrators for a book on the future of illustration I co-authored with Marshal Arisman, it is clear that editorial is still the favoured genre. Despite the allure of motion, the expansiveness of graphic novels, and the joy of three-dimensional objects, the traditional, single-image editorial format continues to be the most effective means of reaching an audience. An editorial illustrator may not always be the muse-driven author of independent ideas, but the medium allows for individual personalities to emerge, intelligence to shine, and even innovation to peek through from time to time.

The new American illustrators are not wed to a national style (as they were during the

Rockwell 1940s and 1950s), but many share certain visual and conceptual similarities. Humour (often subtle, occasionally satiric) is a consistent feature, and probably one of the most difficult conceits to do well. Also, rather than exacting and detailed renderings, new drawing methods are loose and sketchy with an expressionist sensibility, or resolutely mechanical in an ironically faux anonymous manner. Graphic and typographic design is also a factor in some work. Perhaps a debt is owed to Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, or Lawrence Weiner, or maybe it is simply a quest for new ways to make illustration accessible to a broad public. Words – scrawled, scripted, and typeset – are prevalent.

In most magazines and newspapers, the space allotted to illustration has shrunk in direct proportion to limited amounts of editorial space owing, in large part, to steady decreases in advertisements and increases in printing and production costs. While this is not a positive portent, it is nothing new, either. Illustration has long suffered the vicissitudes of the market and the ravages of the economy. What it means is that illustrators have adapted to survival in a Darwinian way. They have become more minimalist in form and content in order to communicate in smaller spaces, void of visual effluvia. Therefore shorthand is required, with clarity and eloquence the goal.

While some young art directors prefer photography, there has been a recent surge in art directors who have keen illustration preferences and who have opened the pages of venerable newspapers and magazines, including the New Yorker, New York Times, Time, and various contemporary publications, to the new illustration. While some of the old guard is still active, the twenty-somethings are contributing timely visual points of view. Among them, Tamara Shopsin, Oliver Munday, Maxwell Holyoke-Hirsch, and Jeremy Traum, have in a short time been present in a wide range of periodicals. Each has a distinct method but all are connected to the zeitgeist. And there's nothing better than that good old zeitgeist.



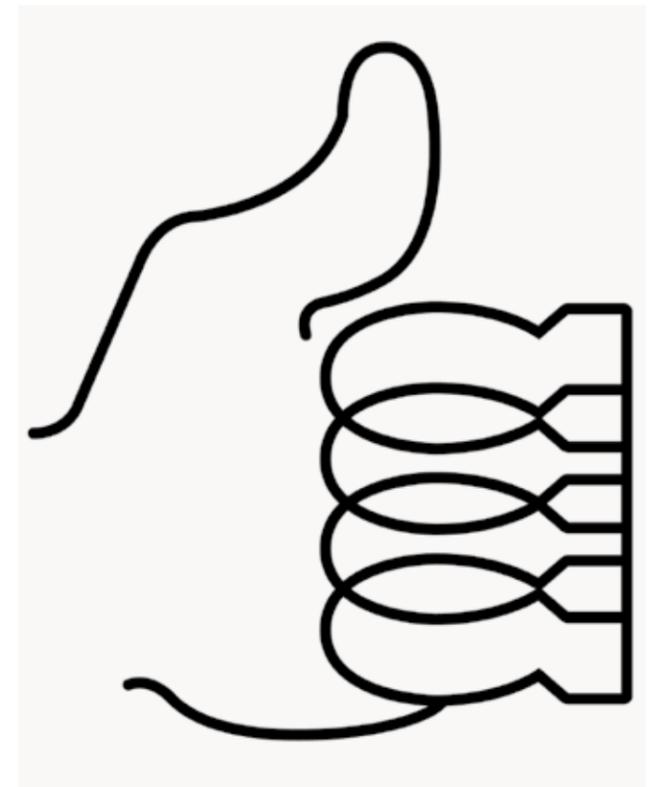
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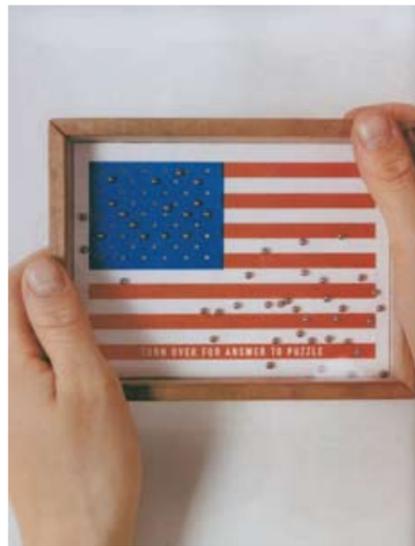


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- 1 China Disney
Jeremy Traum, mixed media – 2005
- 2 Obsessions with Fertility
Maxwell Holyoke-Hirsch, for Nylon Magazine, pencil and computer – 2006
- 3 Bird Flu
Tamara Shopsin, silk-screened card, photographed by Jason Fulford – 2006
- 4 Iran Nuclear
Oliver Munday, for The New York Times - 2008



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Steve Heller: Who inspired you most?

Tamara Shopsin: Harpo Marx

How long have you been illustrating professionally?

Part time since fall of 2005, then sometime in 2006 I went full time.

Can you categorize or describe your style?

Conceptual illustration.

Why do you draw the way you do?

I don't have one set way I draw. When I come up with an idea for a story I draw it the way that will best illustrate it and that will hold the page best.

Why do you conceptualize the way you conceptualize?

I don't really analyze it. I just try to find an idea that surprises me.

Would you say you have a particular conceit that recurs in your work, something that is uniquely your own?

No, but I'm a bit too close to it to say.

What is the most successful work you've done of late, and why?

I have been collaborating a lot with the photographer Jason Fulford (I am also married to him). We compliment each other really well. He does more than just take the photo and I do more than just brainstorming. I am always proud of the stuff we make together as it is always a

24 true collaboration. We just did a rush job for the Science Times that I really liked. It had so many parts to it that came together so fast. It was an article set to run on April Fool's day. The story was the history of pranks and their meaning. There was one part of the article about a tribe that has children bury a box as a rite of passage. They tell the child a treasure will grow but if you peek the treasure will disappear. We had the idea of a printing error covering a box so you couldn't see the treasure. With a caption saying this was the treasure of the New Guinea tribe. It was a prank on the reader. Kelly Doe was the art director and she got the idea right away and did a great job getting through the powers that be.

Most of your work is editorial, but do you work in more 'untraditional' media?

I also make novelties. They are maybe more in the genre of design, but I always try to involve illustration into them. Using hand type or a little drawing. I made a five-year diary and I illustrated the bellyband with a man looking at the rings of a tree. I made a Lincoln lapel pin and found a funny quote by him that I worked into a forgery of his handwriting on the package.

Since you've been at it a comparatively short time, how do you see your work evolving or changing?

I work with a bunch of great art directors who have really helped me evolve. I owe a lot to them and I really do believe that art directors make my work better. Something that has really changed since I started is the amount of ideas I send to an art director. I send a lot less now,

though I come up with just as many. I have learned which ideas are stinkers, which are funny only to me, and which the editors will go for but which I would be embarrassed to draw. But most of all, my standards have grown with each job. I keep setting the bar higher for what is an acceptable idea and I see that continuing. **What do you want to say through your work – or are you simply solving others' problems?** I try to make my illustrations work on two planes. On one it must match the article well. On the other I want it to be able to stand apart on its own. Would this illustration still say something if it was by its lonesome? I always want the answer to be yes. I want it to say lots of different things. Observations, jokes, sympathy and sadness, you name it.

Is there a process you go through to make your solutions your own property?

I love crossword puzzles. I like fixing things. So to solve a problem is really what I want to do. I love that moment when I get an idea and I know it is an elegant solution. That is enough.

Further reading:

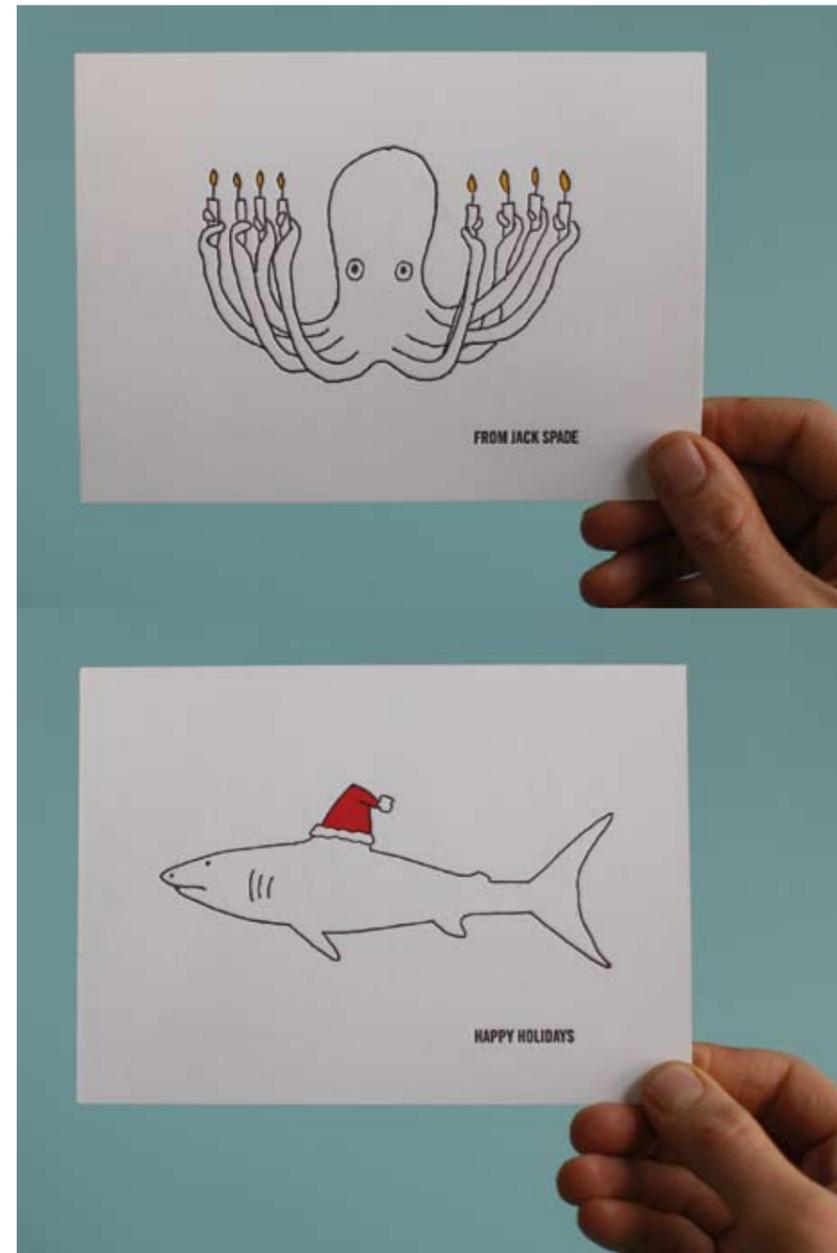
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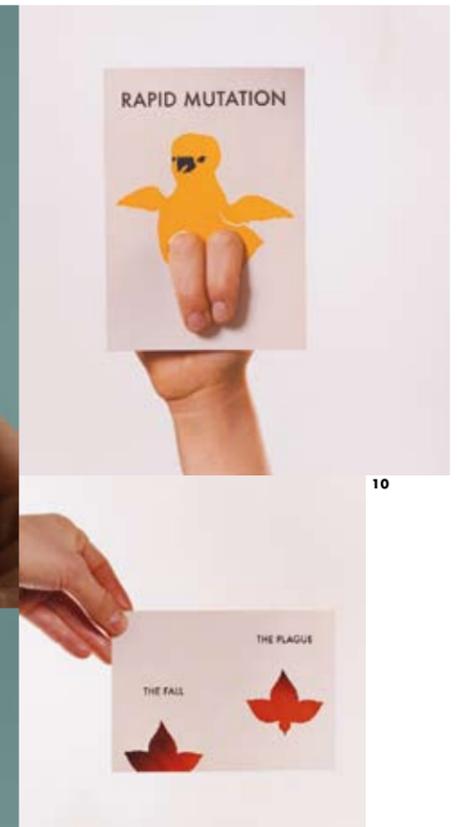
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TAMARA SHOPSIN

Tamara Shopsin was born April 1979. She is a cook, designer and illustrator and splits her time between New York City and Scranton, Pennsylvania. She is a regular contributor to The New York Times and The Walrus. Her illustrations have also been featured in Paper, Good, and on Jack Spade paper goods. Recently a book of her line drawings was published, titled C'est le Pied.

- 5 Puzz
Homemade dexterity puzzle, for Good Magazine – 2006
- 6 Clothbound diary – 2006
- 7 Glasses Woman
Pen and ink – 2008
- 8, 9 Postcard Octo and Postcard Shark (reverse side)
Letter press – 2008
- 10 Bird 3 Mutat
Silk-screened card, photographed by Jason Fulford – 2006
- 11 Bird Camus
Silk-screened card, photographed by Jason Fulford – 2006
- 12 Boxer
silkscreen – 2007



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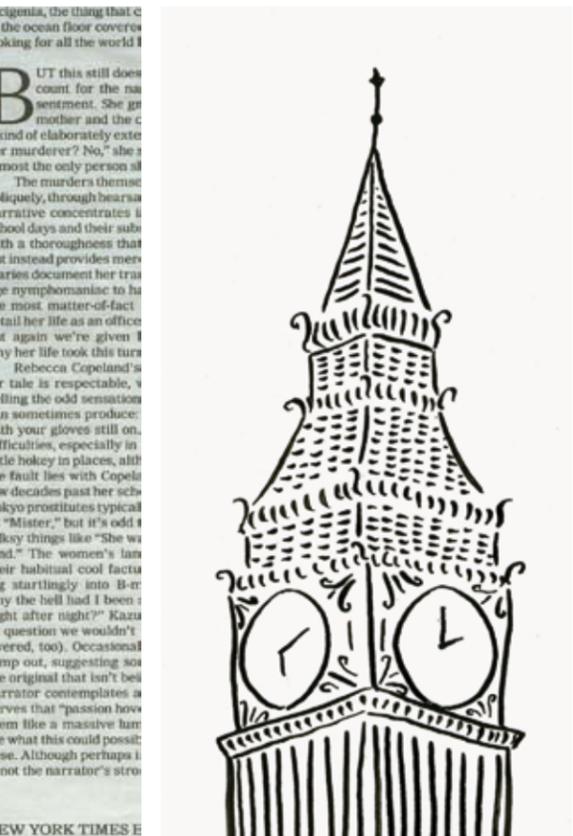


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13 [Trans Chile](#)
Vector illustration - 2007
14 [La Vida Loca](#)
Vector illustration - 2007
15 [Trans Japan](#)
Vector illustration - 2007
16 [Clocktower](#)
Pen and ink - 2008



14

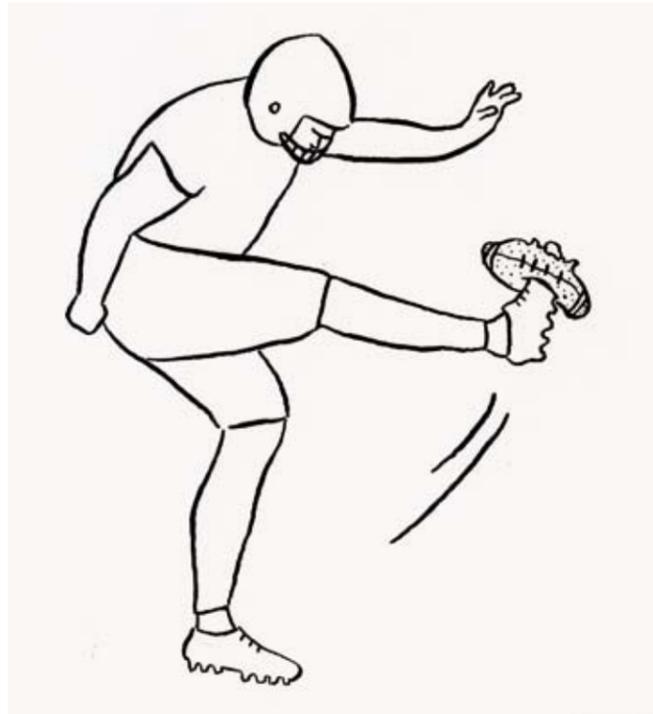


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Vector illustration - 2007
14 [La Vida Loca](#)
Vector illustration - 2007
15 [Trans Japan](#)
Vector illustration - 2007
16 [Clocktower](#)
Pen and ink - 2008



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17 [Linc](#)
Cloisonné pin - 2006
18 [Owl](#)
Photo collage - 2007
19 [Football](#)
Pen and ink - 2008
20 [Worm](#)
Pen & ink - 2008



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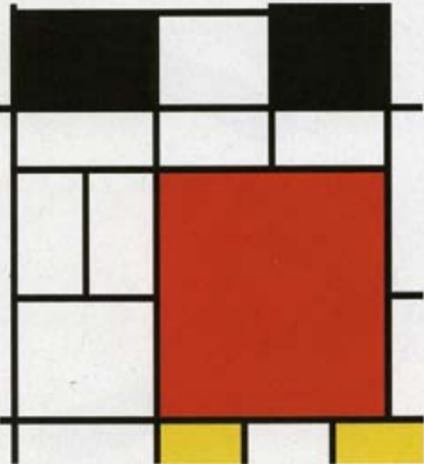


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IMAGININGS

THE HIDDEN MICKEY MOUSE

by John Reardon
illustrations by Tamara Shopsin



I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter. —Walt Disney

The Diaries of Mickey Mouse by Mickey Mouse Gudgeon and Crankshaft (2007), 452 pp.

Students of the cinema, and devotees of contempor...

critical and financ... year that he began... in diary form. Evc... can discern some... of his personality... presses his skepti... his breakthrough

Was it not the ge... to a fly, which... ately, with very... on an excrement

The quotation... irist remained a... out his life. It was... would result in an... 1934 classic Gulliv... would be charact... thropic rancour th... his chops underc...

The diaries pr... settling, view of... contemporaries. C... "incapable of an... onscreen antagon... "the table manne... tive, however, is r...

Felix the Cat and I... in Mouse's 1935 fi... arrival of a distin... singled out for al... entry for Novemb... is a philistine. He... Later, in an entry... Felix the Cat's aut... told that "it is reall... [Duck's] films wo...

Such emotion... logical disquiet, a... ly in Mouse's de... Since the release... nic had been as c... on Capri, where

others worked... n Fruter, which, in 50 years... the headlines have vanished... addition, the closing notes of... goes back to the old frontier... gathering anecdotes for a... ters takes a big thing that... You just have these two little... (en is the author of Sweet and... and Gironx).

... maybe the new Dean Koontz... and loved. But movie star... thirst. The new book on Ava... (St. Martin's Press), was as... Robert Mitchum. The one I'm eagerly... of Kim Stanley by Jon... nose I adored that actress and know... able waiting for that, I'm devouring... (Blood Moon Productions, Inc.), a... plots of Marlon Brando. The book... to be of Brando orally servicing his... the men, women and even... Brando comes off as a wild sexual



22

THE FUNNY PAGES
Former-Self Defense
By Peter Sagal



One summer evening, years ago, when I was a nice, collegebound high-school senior, my girlfriend and I were wandering around the sidewalks of a closed shopping center along with some other nice, collegebound seniors. But there were also some bad kids there — the kids who were headed for lives of petty crime and repeated misdemeanor citations before finally giving in and becoming policemen. We were on foot. They were driving around slowly in an old Chevy. Thus, you could tell us apart. The Chevy pulled up next to me, and the driver rolled down his window.

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MIND | Benedict Carey
April Fool! The Purpose of Pranks

Keep it above the belt, stop short of total humiliation and, if possible, mix in some irony, some drama, maybe even a bogus call from the person's old flame or new boss. A good prank, of course, involves good stagecraft. But it also requires emotional intuition.



SURPRISE A tribe's initiation rite includes a box with "buried treasure."

Science
THE BRAIN AS SPOTLIGHT
Basics: The on-again, off-again mechanics of paying attention.
FACES IN THE DUGOUT
Scientist at Work: A new way of comparing baseball managers.

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It's policies will only... bal image and to our... asurably to the risk... ured while wearing... intelligence forces.

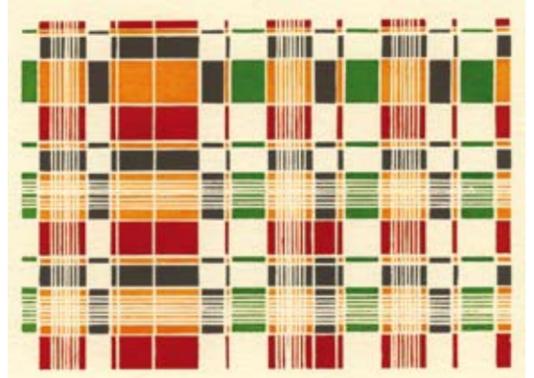
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has insulated itself... fits in a bankruptcy... ie new trust will in... and cash contribu... xtended period, both... pty.
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project was believed... the clerical sleight of... ments" for the inter... morphed in the post-... hange."
I tell our students that the trick is to accept the inevitable and to shoot for a very good short story.

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- 21 Micky Mondr
Vector illustration — 2007
22 Summer Read
Pen & ink — 2006
23 Newspaper Treas
Photo collage, collaboration with Jason Fulford — 2008
24 Real Magglue
Pen & ink — 2007
25 PhdEx
Vector illustration — 2007
26 Silk Patt
Silkscreen — 2006
27 The E and Paper
Pen & ink — 2007

and the liberal interventionist philoso... of bombing for humanity. We must... rejoin the world community.
JERRY WALLINGFORD
San Diego, Oct. 4, 2007
time and continues to be understood as... a clear violation of international law.
As Mr. Cohen says, "Distinctions mat... ter!"
VIRGINIA HELD
Vineyard Haven, Mass., Oct. 4, 2007

Taking a Shorter, Happier Route to a Ph.D.

PhdEx

To the Editor:
Re "Exploring Ways to Shorten the Ascent to a Ph.D.," by Joseph Berger (On Education column, Oct. 3):
In 1960 I took a Ph.D. at Princeton four years after graduating from college (Amherst). But I had begun preparing seriously for professional scholarship while an undergraduate.
The European tradition has always treated university students as pre-professionals. Today's undergraduates in the United States should also understand that the sooner you start, the faster you arrive at your goal.

To the Editor:
In my role as the director of a Ph.D. program, I often quote David Touretzky, an old college friend, who once explained that you start graduate school with a vision of "my dissertation: the movie" and you end graduate school with "my dissertation: the pretty good short story."
I tell our students that the trick is to accept the inevitable and to shoot for a very good short story.

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money is coming in."
These sources was Senator Murkowski, also She was appointed to office in 2002 by ank, who held the seat for 22 years before for governor. Ms. Murkowski said last Democrats in control and so-called ear-greater scrutiny in both parties, "the way ally done business or operated as a state Big building projects like, say, Ted Stege International Airport, may be on the

u think about how the monies have come u much of it has been because we needed tain capacity that states in the lower 48 generations," Ms. Murkowski said. "We catching-up period. It wasn't more than , it was our fair share. We were maturing

owski, 50, is among a younger generation along with Ms. Palin, 43, and Mayor of Anchorage, a Democrat, who cast more inclined to find common ground its behind closed doors.
furkowski uses words like "sustainable" is about developing natural resources, asses interest in alternative energy like geothermal and solar. But like Senator on Young, the state's sole representative and also a Republican, she supports drille Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a proud increase oil revenues but has little Democratic Congress.
as an emergency option should it ever it is like no other: the Permanent Fund, a lossus built on oil revenues over the ears. The account earns the interest that ents with their annual dividend.
ew politicians who publicly support taper purposes are usually met with an icy se. Few are standing up for big new tax-ils for a "long-range plan" are drowned ch for a new resource boom. How about a gold mine in Bristol Bay? The natural Drilling in the refuge?
keep punting because they hope the next nt is going to bail us out," said Stanley E. itive director of Audubon Alaska, who f his time working to protect wilderness me of those proposals. "That constant ere. You have a lot of Alaska sort of colg its breath."

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century Japanese novel, though scholars are still... bating whether that's intentional or the result of an

The Sopranos finale outraged viewers. But it's not the first work to end in the mid...

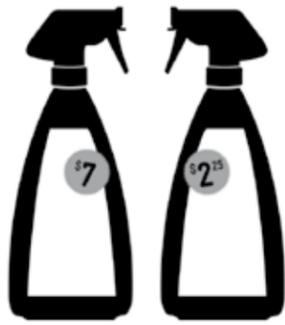
finished manuscript. Deliberate or not, the end works, in part because "Genji" is among the most "prano"-like of texts — an extended family saga, abt the son of an imperial father, in which the plot ofl meanders and people suddenly drop out and then appear years later, just as they do in life.
To the idea of irresolution — the idea of life a plot that goes on and on and then stops, still in me res — the "Sopranos" ending added ambiguity, anot time-honored convention. It's the principle behind ending of Charlotte Brontë's "Villette," to take one many examples, which she rewrote at the urging ofl father so that it's left for the reader to decide whetl or not the heroine's true love, M. Paul, dies in a sh wreckle

To judge from the blogs, viewers are about equa divided as to whether that blackout represents the e of consciousness and the darkness of the grave: meaning that Tony does indeed get whacked in the e — or is simply a dramatic fade-out on a diminished l ongoing family situation, with Carmela as mora compromised as ever, Meadow as clueless, and A. J. closer to growing up than when the series began. This reading there is closure of at least one so though: Tony is at last finished with analysis.

If you were fashionably inclined, you could a give the ending a meta-reading. What is that d screen but an image of the darkness that was there l fore you turned your TV on in the first place?
In this interpretation we are reminded, the way are reminded, say, by all the textual gimmicks "Tristram Shandy," that what we have been attendi to is a construct — a show, in this case. Not only th but we also realize that Tony never lived in West Ca well, N.J., at all, but inside our sets, where he resid still, granted a gift that is about the last that we wo ever have expected for him: immortality.



Tamara Shopsin



OLIVER MUNDAY

Oliver Munday was born October 1984. He is a graphic designer/illustrator living and working in Baltimore, Maryland. With Bernard Canniffe and Mike Weikert, he co-founded Piece, a socially based design collaborative. Piece believes that 'designers can play a significant role in positive change and social justice.' Munday's work has been recognized by many of the major design publications, and he was recently featured as one of STEP magazine's 25 freshest minds in design.

Steve Heller: Who inspired you most?

Oliver Munday: I would say the single most inspiring person has been Paul Sahre. His work is brilliant, and his ideas always shine through. I saw the way he approached illustration, like a designer, and it opened the doors to that world for me.

How long have you been illustrating professionally?

About a year.

Can you categorize or describe your style?

My style would be to try and have no style, aesthetically speaking. I would hope that my work is smart and concise. I think I'm different from a lot of illustrators in that I don't have a specifically recognizable aesthetic. I enjoy it when people tell me that they were 'surprised' to see it was me who did a particular illustration.

Why do you draw the way you do?

Each project calls for its own style. I approach each assignment as a designer, because that is the way I think. I don't have one particular drawing style. I have several aesthetic styles that are repeated from time to time, because often enough the same style is suitable for numerous subjects.

Why do you conceptualize the way you conceptualize?

I am always thinking about how to dig deeper into the subject. I think the most exciting things happen when there are multiple layers in an illustration that get people to stop and think about it. Also, I'm always looking for the clarity

of the idea to shine through. A great way to put it is in a phrase coined by the design studio Planet Propaganda – 'simplify/amplify.'

Would you say you have a particular conceit that recurs in your work, something that is uniquely your own?

I can't say that I do right now, I guess I will have to try and come up with one.

Where do you situate yourself in the wide world of illustration today?

Honestly, I'm just starting out, so I'm learning everyday. I'm new to being an illustrator. Right now I'm enjoying the editorial side of illustration, and I hope to continue to thrive in that environment.

Most of your work is editorial, but do you work in more 'untraditional' media?

Outside of the world of illustration I experiment with more untraditional media... recycled materials, found objects. It is always nice to introduce those ideas where appropriate.

Since you've been at it a comparatively short time, how do you see your work evolving or changing?

I think exploring new media and new aesthetic tricks will keep the work fresh. I don't want to become stale, so finding new ways to reinvent how I think about communicating will be important as well.

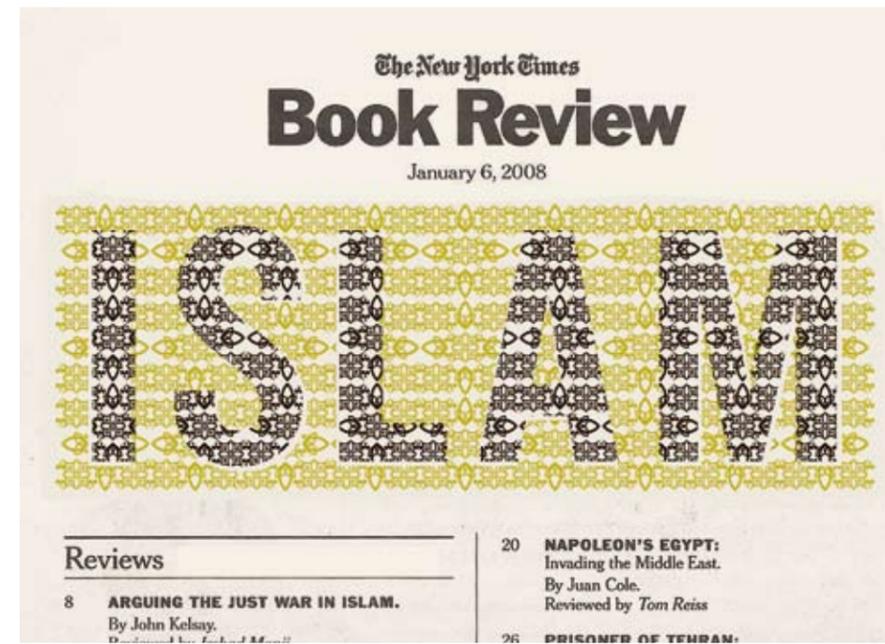
What do you want to say through your work – or are you simply solving others' problems?

I think that is dependent on the type of work. Coming from the world of design, I try and keep my own aesthetic agenda as hidden as possible. Each project calls for something new, and I try to communicate that in the most appropriate way possible.

Is there a process you go through to make your solutions your own property?

I haven't thought about that at all, really. Most of the editorial illustration I have been doing is collaborative, in that there is an art director who I'm working with to solve the piece. I don't have a specific process to make them my own property; each piece is a product of all parties involved.

Further reading:
www.olivermunday.com



Heart Out, Homer

of medieval Persia is presented in a hefty new English translation.



ry; some of these could go on for seven or eight hours with only a short break. The Mughal elite also had a great tradition of commissioning private recitations. The ing number of stories, which would take several weeks of all-night storytelling to complete; the fullest printed version, the last volume of which was finally published

28 [Free Trade](#)
New York Times Illustration in response to an Op-Ed piece on free trade – 2008

29 [Consumption](#)
For The New York Times – 2008

30 [Islam Contents](#)
For The New York Times Book Review – 2008

31 [In Fed We Trust](#)
For The New York Times Letters Page – 2008

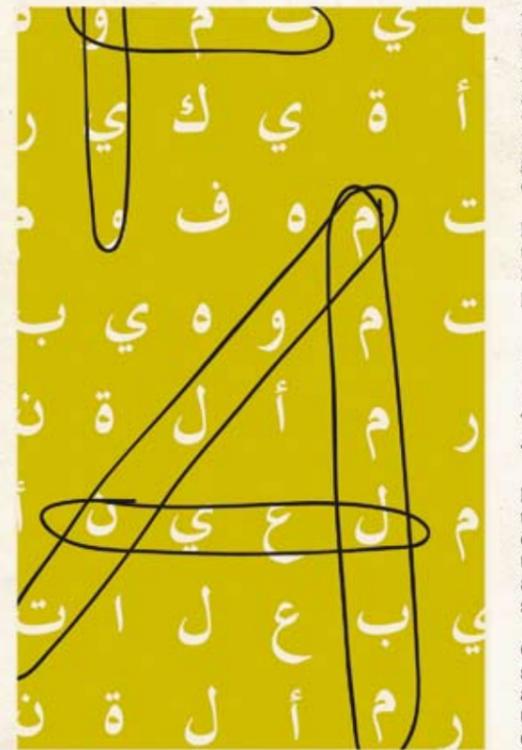
32 [Amir Hamza](#)
For The New York Times Book Review, about the imaginative world of author Amir Hamza – 2008

33 [Islam Contents](#)
For The New York Times Book Review – 2008

34 [Gas](#)
For The New York Times Letters page – 2008



Arabic Lessons



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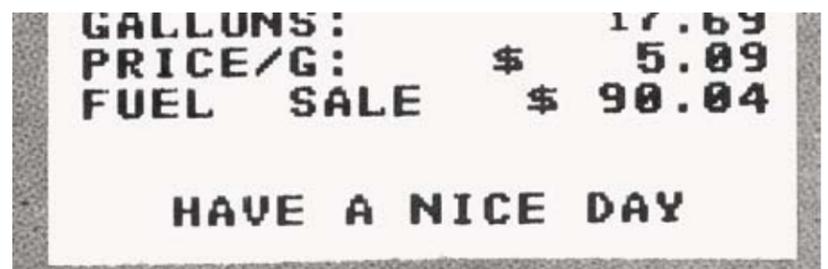
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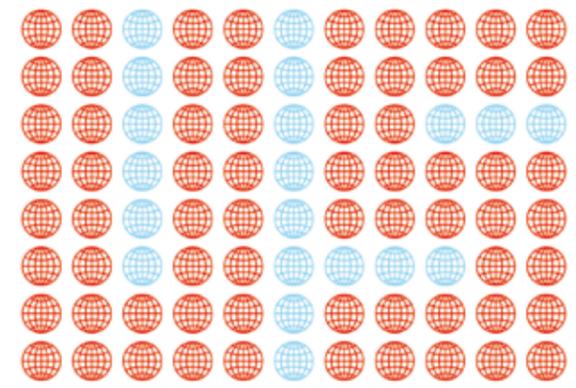
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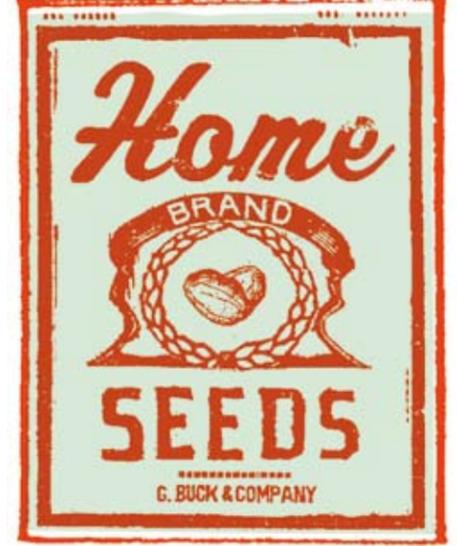
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- 35 [Help](#)
For The New York Times – 2008
- 36 [Neighborhood Watch](#)
For The New York Times – 2008
- 37 [Islam Anti-Semitism](#)
For The New York Times Book Review – 2008
- 38 [NYT Week in Review/Music Timeline](#)
For The New York Times Week in Review Section – 2008
- 39 [Beatbots](#)
Illustration/Logotype for a Baltimore Area arts and culture website – 2008
- 40 [US](#)
For The New York Times, reviewing a book about one author's claim that the US should be the next liberal empire – 2007
- 41 [Poster for the 2007 Hampden Fest](#), three colour silkscreen – 2007
- 42 [Seeds](#)
For The New York Times Book Review – 2008



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Paradise

etic, philosophical approach to his favorite outdoor activity.

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outdoor
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THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, JULY 29, 2007

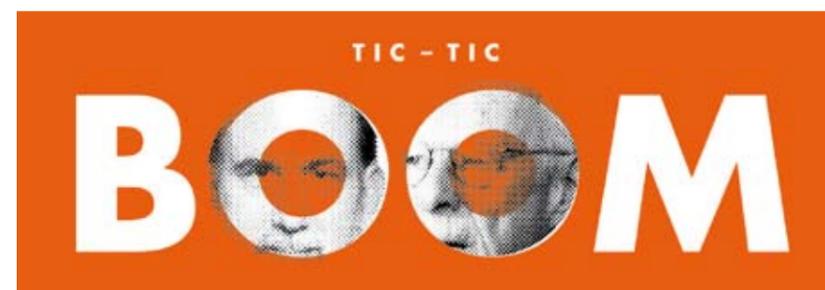


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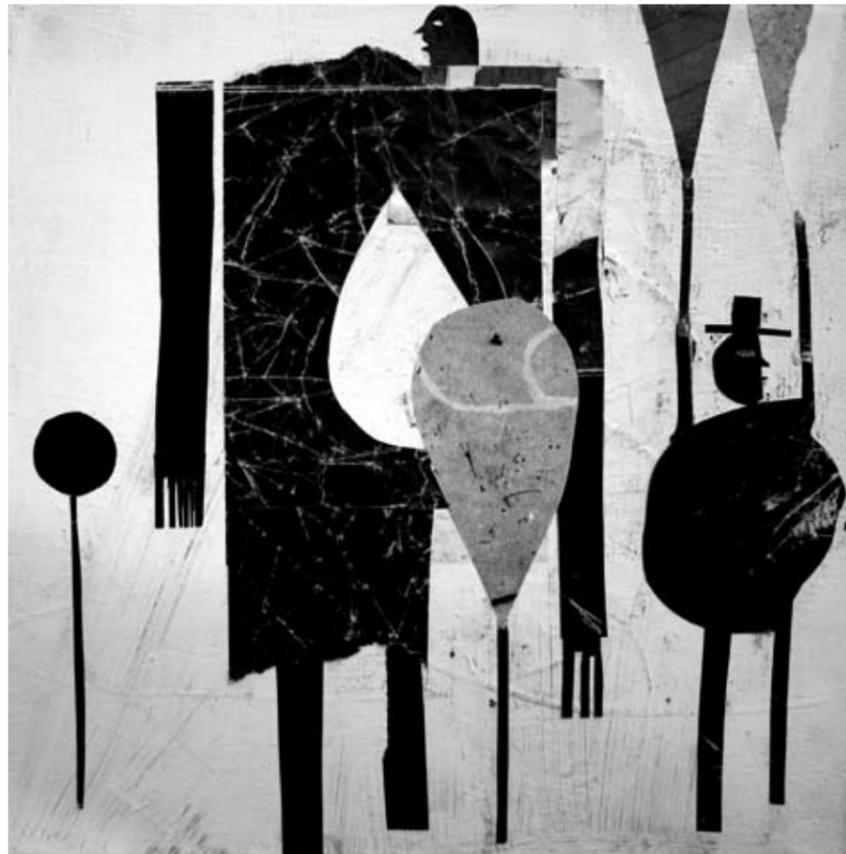
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Stacking the Court



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- 43 Sharpie Jacket
Hand-drawn leather jacket, made with sharpies – 2006
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49 *Soul Power*
Self-initiated, mixed media collage – 2008
50 *Cravestone*
Gouache on printmaking paper – 2007
51 *The Lochness monster*
For Fantagraphics, pencil, indian ink and computer – 2007
52 *Return to the Island of Naboombu*
For 800 Magazine, pencil, Indian ink and computer – 2006
53 *Untitled*
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54 *Banshee*
Gouache and pen on printmaking paper – 2007

MAXWELL HOLYOKE-HIRSCH

Maxwell Holyoke-Hirsch was born April 1984, and raised in a 'photo lab darkroom called Photo-Blow Up, and his parent's art studio in the suburbs of Lemon Grove, California.' Holyoke-Hirsch's work deals with ideas of 'struggle, building something from nothing, loss, poverty, impossibility, spirituality, addiction, progression and love.' He currently lives and works in San Francisco and is preparing for his first solo show in San José. Clients include The New York Times, Hefty Records, The Walrus, Virgin Records, The Stranger, Nylon Magazine, The Yes Men and Fantagraphics books.

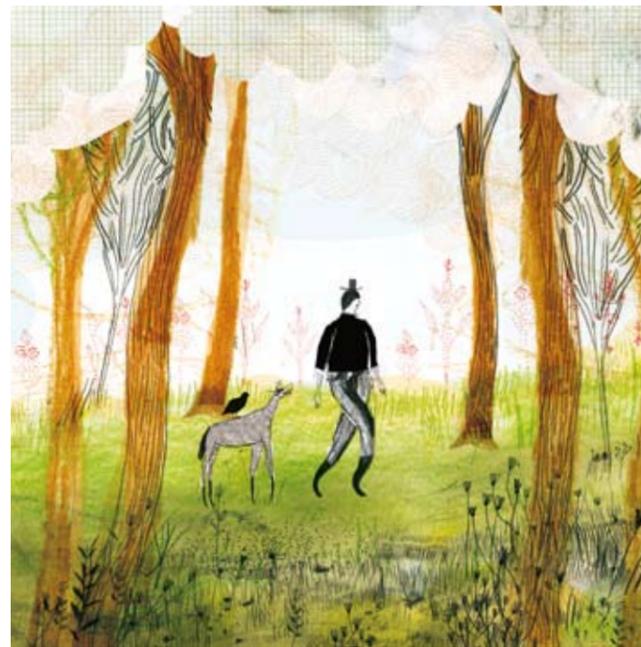
Steve Heller: Who inspired you most?
Maxwell Holyoke-Hirsch: My parents, Matisse, Picasso and Hieronymus Bosch.
How long have you been illustrating professionally?
I have been illustrating for two years.
Can you categorize or describe your style?
Handmade digital illustration.
Why do you draw the way you do?
I like the process to be loose and raw. The moments I embrace most are often the ones where I feel that I have messed up or didn't put a line where I thought it needed to go. Working with obstacles and nudging myself through those moments could be a direct result of why my work looks the way it does. I like to mess things up and fix them.
Why do you conceptualize the way you conceptualize?
Adventure and the enchantment of youth used to be a main concern of mine and I feel those concerns were behind a lot of my concepts when I first started illustrating. As I get older I see my work getting more serious and in turn affecting how I have been going about conceptualizing a piece.
Would you say you have a particular conceit that recurs in your work, something that is uniquely your own?
My soul.
Where do you situate yourself in the wide world of illustration today?
I imagine the illustration world as an infinite ladder, I am somewhere near the beginning.
What is the most successful work you've done of late, and why?

61 I would say the album cover I did for The Submarines – a band out of LA. It has gotten me a lot of good responses and lots of work.
Most of your work is editorial, but do you work in more 'untraditional' media?
I've been doing graffiti and illegal murals around the city.
Since you've been at it a comparatively short time, how do you see your work evolving or changing?
I see it getting bigger, brighter, more conceptual and more serious.
What is it you want to say through your work – or are you simply solving others' problems?
I feel like I'm still learning so much about the world, about process, and about my mind, that what I'm trying to say is in a constant flux. I mainly want people to be able to find some detail that connects their life to my work, that's what concerns me most right now. Human beings are all so similar in a sense that we all go through stages of growth and face many similar gains and losses. I'm fascinated by this and try to make a priority out of facilitating emotional connections between the lives of my viewers and my work.
Is there a process you go through to make your solutions your own property?
There is a certain equilibrium I am trying to find, somewhere between chaos and complete organization. It's a haphazard process where following instinct and second-guessing myself supports the foundations of my properties.

Further reading:
www.lorenholyoke.com



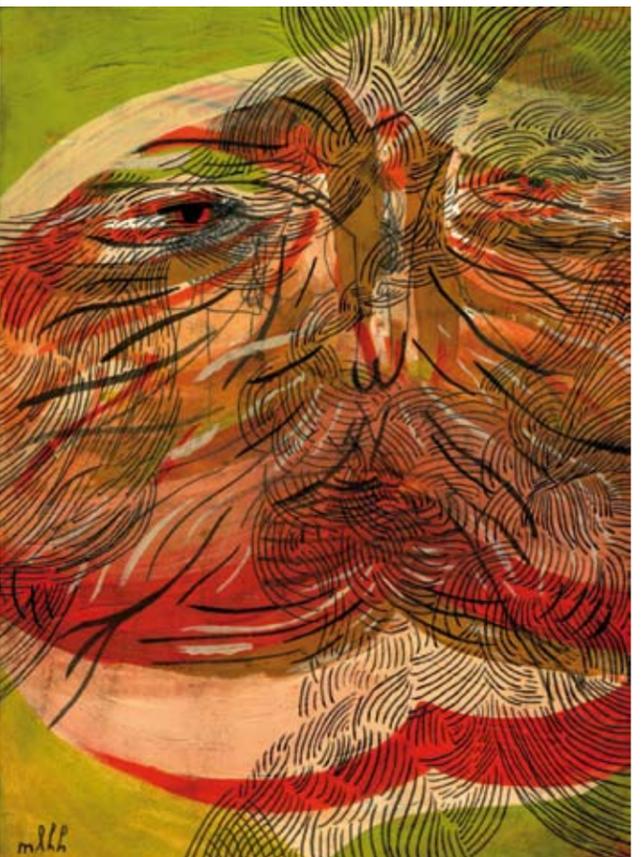
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35 Improbable Patagonian Funambulists
Gouache on canvas – 2008
36 Hell
Gouache on canvas – 2008
37 New Showcases for Old Work
For The New York Sun, Indian ink and computer – 2007
38 Untitled
Indian ink on printmaking paper – 2007
39 Studio exercise 76
Gouache on canvas – 2008



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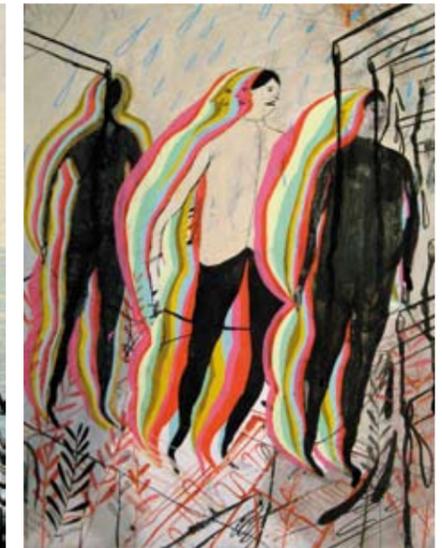
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- 80 Final Tracks, The Stranger, Missing snowboarders on Crystal Mountain
Pencil and computer – 2008
- 81 The Submarines
Album cover illustration, pencil, Indian ink and computer – 2006
- 82 Untitled
Indian ink on printmaking paper – 2007
- 83 Siddhartha
Self-initiated, pencil and computer – 2007
- 84 Brooding Reverie Partition Kaleidoscope Refinement
Gouache on canvas – 2008

Jeremy Traum was born June 1978 and raised in New Jersey. He 'stowed away on a Corellian freighter destined for Alderaan, and likes half sour pickles, enjoys cooking, crafts and crocheting.' He has been published in the New York Times, Harper's Magazine, Atlantic Monthly, The Progressive, Wall Street Journal, Village Voice, The Walrus, The New Yorker and LA Weekly.

65, 67, 68 Branding
Mixed media – 2004
66 Jelly 1
Mixed media – 2007

Steve Heller: Who inspired you most?

Jeremy Traum: Sue Coe, Bill Sienkiewicz, A.B. Frost, Daumier, Winsor McCay, Heinrich Kley, Geoff Darrow, Katsuhiko Otomo, and the Japanese block printers especially Yoshi Toshi. Also writers like Naomi Klein, Slavoj Zizec and Philip K. Dick.

How long have you been illustrating professionally?

Four years

Can you categorize or describe your style?

Not really, since I try to base my work on content. Style is merely an afterthought or natural progression of things

Why do you draw the way you do?

I try to draw to the best of my ability. I'm working with flat color so the use of black plays a very important role in creating the illusion of texture, volume and space

Why do you conceptualize the way you conceptualize?

I used to walk around and wait for lightning to strike, but when you have a deadline you can't always do that. Usually ideas just come automatically from reading the article. These are just stepping-stones though. A great idea in the head may not be so snappy on paper, but that's just part of the process. If you want to delve further there is the whole question of what is conceptual art? People in the industry like to use the word 'concept' a lot but they are really just substituting it for 'idea', which I guess doesn't sound as fancy. My idea of a truly successful piece of conceptual art is when you have separate elements within the same composition interacting with one another, when those elements end up expressing a truth that was not the artist's original intent you have conceptual art, like when the piece takes on a life of its own.

Would you say you have a particular conceit that recurs in your work, something that is uniquely your own?

I'm not that familiar with other people's work so I don't know how unique mine is. I deal with running motifs like power, abuse of power, man vs. nature, man's contempt for nature, industry and the effect it has on the environment, war, the triviality of war, theoretical physics. Who knows? Maybe my art is totally therapeutic.

What is the most successful work you've done of late, and why?

82 Two illustrations for the Science Times on an article about gravity and the laws of nature. The only reason why I feel that it was successful is because I received at least 50 emails from readers who loved the illustrations and wanted to purchase prints of them. When I can create something that people appreciate it keeps me going and makes it all seem worthwhile.

Since you've been at it a comparatively short time, how do you see your work evolving or changing?

I don't know. But my work is always changing, and hopefully for the better. You can never be too good a drawer, and I definitely know I still have a lot of studying to do. But that's part of what's exciting about it. What will my work look like in five years? I have a vague idea. Just hints of something big floating on the very edge of my mind. But everything I do I already see done in my head. My job is basically to figure out how to get it on paper so others can see it too.

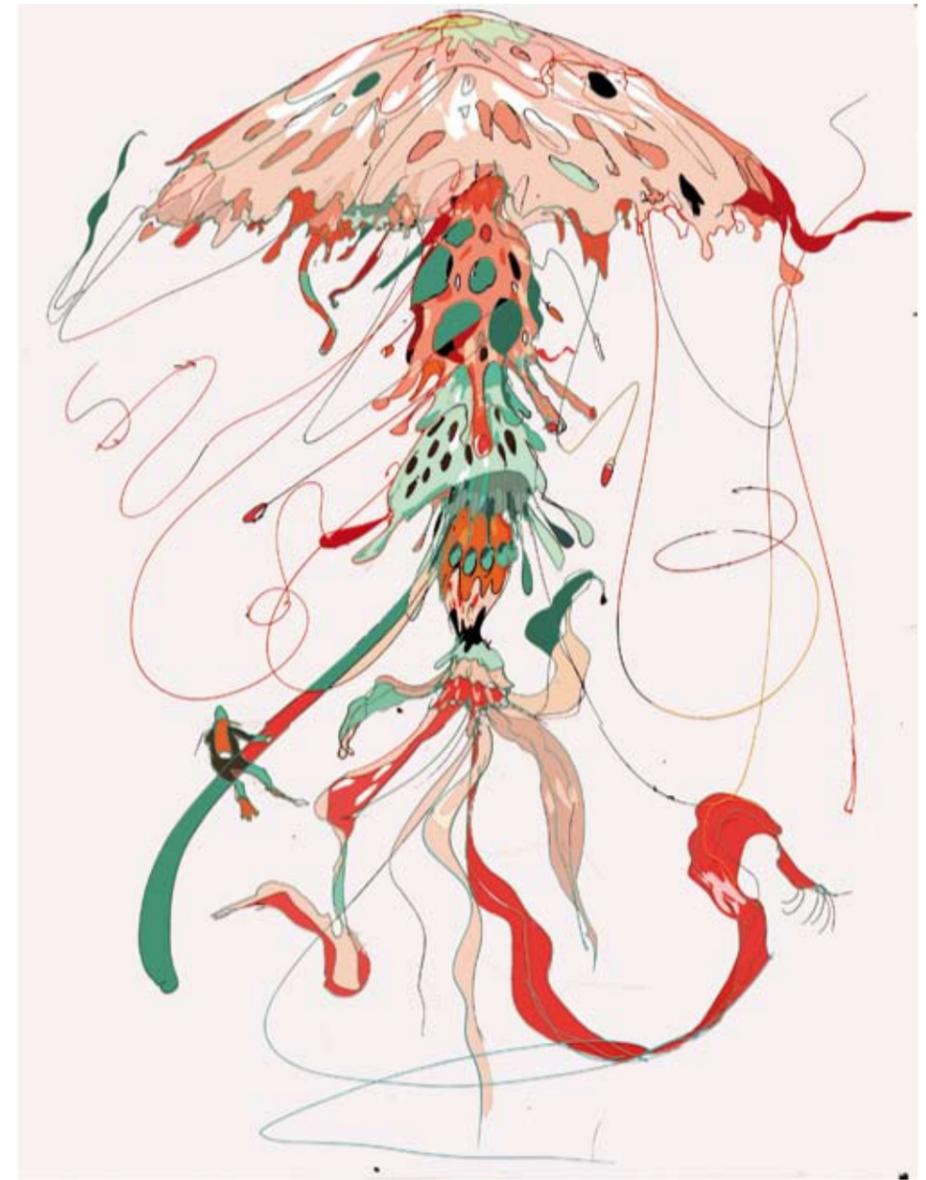
What do you want to say through your work – or are you simply solving others' problems?

It is funny when people refer to illustrators as 'visual problem solvers.' I never really understood what this meant since I don't see a problem that needs to be solved, just different perspectives on how to represent a thing. If there is one thing I'd like to say through my work it is that people 'use' too much. The whole idea of buying something, using it, and then throwing it away is preposterous to me. Consumptionism ends up blinding people to the reality of the situation or anything that's important, for that matter. It also robs you of your soul. People are raised in this country thinking that creating a new product, producing it and selling it is a reason for living, but this couldn't be further from the truth.

Is there a process you go through to make your solutions your own property?

I would like to think that I'm creating my own look or feel that's easily recognizable to the public. I guess that's good business. But it usually ends up with me waking up in the morning with three or four different ideas floating around in my head which I then develop on paper. I guess I just go with instinct and try to create something that I would enjoy looking at. ♦♦

Further reading: www.jeremytraum.com



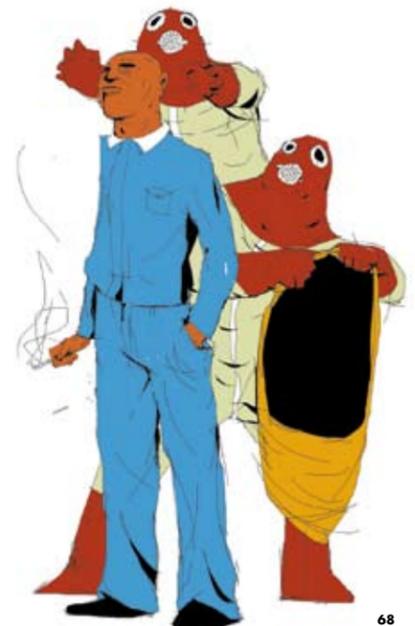
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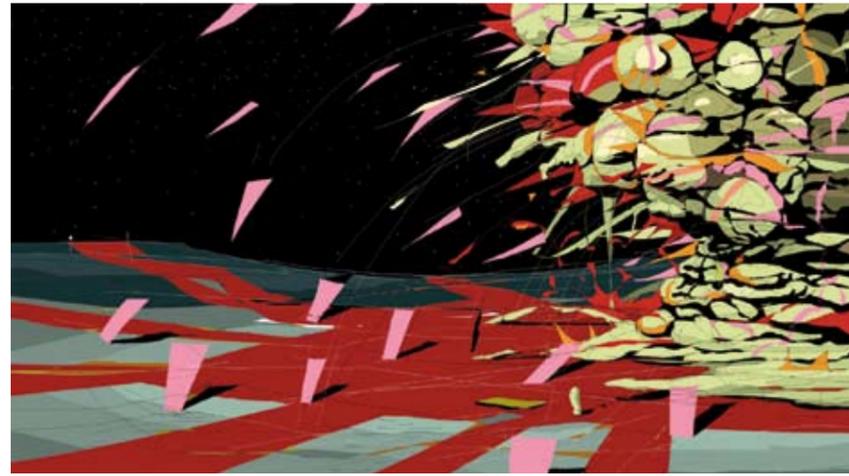
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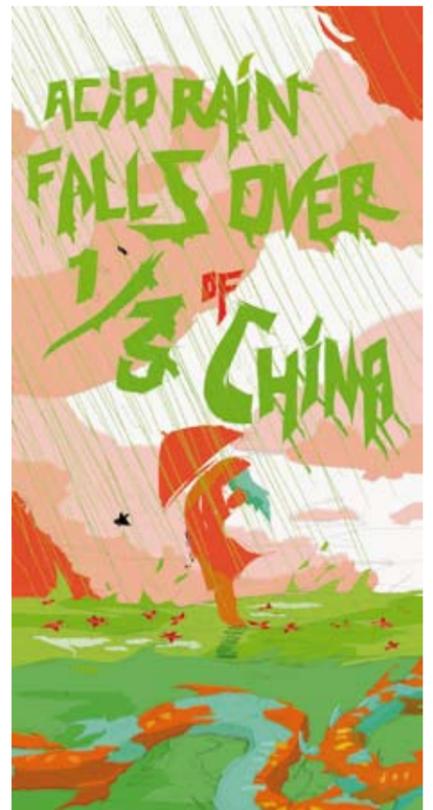
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- 69 *Just Do It 2*
Mixed media - 2007
- 70 *Hiroshima*
Mixed media - 2006
- 71 *I want that One*
Mixed media - 2007
- 72 *Apollitical Machine*
Mixed media - 2006
- 73 *Acid Rain Trois*
Mixed media - 2006
- 74 *LA Weekly*
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- 75 Progress 300
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- 76 Saddam
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- 77 China
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- 78 DMZ Baseball
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- 79 Harp Finish 4
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- 80 Awol
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- 81 Creation High
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- 82 Laws of Nature
Mixed media - 2007



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