

# Entrevistas por Camionetica

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Jeremyville

Versión - Inglés

**They are very different artists that achieve recognition for their artwork and even if they do not have a signature. How did you get that style so unique that defines you?**

I think that the best art is one that comes from a true place of who you are as a person, it should be almost an extension of you. You can only be you. You can't try and be another artist, or have their style, you need to develop your own voice, and your own stylistic language. That is the aim of art, to me, and to always add to that vocabulary. Always invent. Always move on. I have always drawn, so my style is a natural progression and evolution of that journey of drawing year in, year out.

**Someone did not believe in your work when you were starting?**

I didn't really care if others believed in me or not, what mattered was if I believed in myself. And I did.

**How was the initiative of Jeremyville public service?**

I draw about 4-8 per night, but add one daily to my Facebook. The story of how it came about is interesting. It was a purely natural evolution. I have a friend, let's call him H, and one evening as I was talking to him, he was texting some friends at the same time, and I thought: gee our world is changing, and in this case not for the better! we need to hold on to some basic, universal truths, like good manners, politeness, basic humanity, the art of conversation, the art of engaging with people...lest we all become unfeeling, self obsessed robots just interested in the next tweet, or checking our email constantly.

So I wanted to find a solution to this, through my art. But simply, so it would reach people as quickly as a tweet!

So that night I drew a small, simple drawing about 3 kids sitting on the same couch, but not looking at each other, instead, they were all looking at their cell phones, texting other people. Underneath it I wrote in capital letters: "STOP TEXTING & START CONNECTING".

Then that night I added it on my Facebook page, as a catharsis to the earlier texting event. The next morning I awoke, and a lot of my facebook friends had enjoyed the post, and said "hey, I have a friend like H too! Yes, I agree!" etc. So I thought, wow, ok there's a connection here, and so I thought of more simple little drawings with expressions, almost like a community poster you see around town, for like wearing sunscreen, or putting on your seatbelt! SO I called them 'Community Service Announcements' like the Mayor of Jeremyville would approve to have posted around the streets of Jeremyville.

I played off that advertising iconography of a simple headline, and an arresting image. Something to cut through the noise of the web. Something to add a bit of thought into our day, in an increasingly inane social media, where people self absorbingly tweet about what they ate for breakfast, or what party they are going to. This is like the opposite of that, it tried to give something back, a visual haiku, a simple, hopefully poignant message about what it is to be a human in 2010: The things to hold on to, the things to let go of, and the qualities to strive for. At least how I see it. It's nothing profound. I'm just trying to connect somehow. To me that's what my art is about: Connection. So these CSA's touch at the essence of my art, they're the solo acoustic guitar in my repertoire, whereas my paintings are like a full orchestra.

The response has been amazing online. A lot of my facebook friends look forward to the daily posts. I'm up to my 100th daily CSA, (as of Nov 2010) and I have a storage silo of CSA's waiting to tap into. I have a solo show opening in New York tomorrow, where 45 of the CSA's form a giant wall, 18x 24 inches each in frames, all in a grid. (see image). I get emails from 80 year old grandmothers in rural USA, and also cool 12 year old french kids who equally dig the CSA's. It's amazing the age group crossover they have, and the text is really simple english, so it has an international following.

Not sure where the project will head, I'm just trying to keep it low key, let it have its own growth as an ongoing project. I'm aiming to get to 1,000 CSA's, then start on 1,000 +. I see no end to them. I absolutely love drawing them, and that's the main thing. The subject matter is endless, that I try and tackle. I could do a CSA about mushrooms, or lost youth, or a dead cat, or world hunger, whatever! if it's a part of being human, then it is open to explore for a CSA.

**We understand you have a studio in Bondi Beach and one in New York. We can see that both inspire you in different ways, but what do you prefer, And why?**

We've been coming to New York since about 2003 when we went around the world and interviewed artists for our first book 'Vinyl Will Kill', on the designer toy movement. It was always tough to then leave and make the huge trip back to Sydney, so this year we decided to make a longer go of it and get a visa to live and work in the States. And to set up the Jeremyville Salon NYC, which is a large loft space in SoHo.

So we're based here, but really, our studio can be anywhere, we have what I call an inflatable studio! it's in my back pack, and we can set up work anywhere. we were just in Buenos Aires to speak at a conference, and we worked out of the hotel there, no dramas.

so really, our 'studio' is quite portable. But if we had to chose anywhere, New York is such a great city to have as a base, the infrastructure is spot on for career, the services like home delivery, transport, suppliers, clients etc, they have a lot of answers as to how to make life work really efficiently, and it's not that expensive to live. Rent is the only main cost that is quite high. Things like eating out is actually cheaper in New York than in Sydney! in comparison, Sydney is quite an expensive city to live in.

We still have the studio at Bondi Beach, and the main Jeremyville office in Potts Point Sydney, so our ties are still with Sydney. It's just that it made sense basing ourselves here in New York, as a lot of our clients are based in this hemisphere, and the late night phone calls from Sydney to New York at 1am were not that much fun!

**Among so many great projects, to see worked with Kidrobot, Adidas, MTV, Converse, to name a few. What else do you feel you need to achieve?**

I'm working on many projects at the moment, but from here it's all about fewer projects, but more important ones. It's about going to the next level, and always growing and developing as an artist. Any project i take on, needs to be able to help me grow and explore new areas. I never want to just arrive at a formula and stick to that, I see some artists doing that with a style or look they have arrived at, but to me that's not very exciting. I like to mix it up and move on.

**What do you think it takes to get to the point where you are? "Talent, luck, hard work or some of them all?**

All of the above, but if I had to chose one thing, it's hard work. Nothing of importance comes easily, it's all about putting in the tough years to get ahead, and sticking to it, when things seem difficult.

I've never had a real office job where I worked for someone else, I've always had a career from my art, so I have always relied on myself to make a living, and to eat! that sure makes you work hard at your art, when it is all you have to survive. Put yourself into that situation, where art is your only way out, and you will make it!

**Is there a routine behind the job of Jeremyville? What is that object that is never missing from the desk?**

I always have a sketchbook and pens and pencils on my desk. Sometimes I shut off the computer, and put it aside. It can really take up your time, the internet, emailing, working on the screen. You need to separate it sometimes from the creative process, and get back to thinking, drawing, planning, in the real world.

**What new projects are coming to Jeremyville?**

Lots on! 3 new book projects, a large accessory line from Japan, a new toy through Kidrobot, I'm speaking at 2 design conferences in early 2011, in Hong Kong at Semi Permanent, and in Berlin at Pictoplasma. I'm also painting a lot right now, and just had a solo show in New York. I also draw 4-8 community Service Announcements each night, and do street art when I'm not busy.

**Do you ever visit Venezuela?**

I haven't yet, but always wanted to go!! I will soon!

### Which Latin American illustrator do admire?

There is so much great creativity coming out of Latin America, it's hard to choose, I see great street art, great animation studios, design studios, individual artists, agencies, community groups. there is a great creative movement happening here, it's exciting to me. I've been noticing it since about 2002, it's really gaining great momentum! It's very inspiring to watch.

### Your work sits in a spot you define as Pop Surrealism. It's a great descriptor. What's compelling about your work is that it plays at that border between conventional narrative/dream logic. Where does that kind of thinking imagination come from?

To me, my art should reflect my life. My life is not always pop, it's sometimes dark, difficult and complex. All our lives are. I try and bring this layering into even the simplest of my drawings. To me, there is more complexity in a simple drawing, than a highly detailed, overdrawn work, because the viewer is given room to bring that complexity, to add their own meaning to the work. In the absence of information, we naturally substitute our own dialog and experiences. This is a form of play. It's an adult interaction, playing with a notion.

So especially in my comic stories I try and remove as much detail as I can, keep it sparse, and no dialog at all. That way, the visual tells a certain linear narrative, through symbols, and the viewer adds their own layer of story to that. My comics are also circular, in that you could really enter them at any frame, and go around till you arrived at the frame you entered into, and it would make some sort of sense. They don't have to start from the front, they are not like a normal linear comic. The characters in my comics are like actors in a silent art house movie.

### What were your favourite toys as a kid, and how did you play?

Smurfs. Lego. Airfix model aircrafts that I would build. Toy soldiers, through which I would create battles on my bedroom floor. I spent a lot of time on my own as a child, I didn't really have a group of friends or anything, I kept to myself a lot. Every school holiday I would make a list of all the activities I would do that holiday, like write a story book, build a Lego apartment building, draw 100 drawings. That sort of list. I still make lists in my day to day career, things haven't changed that much really. except now it's all a holiday, I don't have school anymore. Every day feels like play.

### Vinyl Will Kill opened a window on a world for many people, it gave designer toys a kind of language and 'permission' in the wider culture. Can you remember what it was like to shine a light on a slightly obscure culture of the design world?

I think the book helped crystalise the various elements of the emerging designer toy genre into one book, that was widely read, gave some legitimacy to the growing movement, and went into a second print run. Personally it opened a lot of doors for me creatively, and I've since created friendships and worked on projects with several of the contributors to the book. Many involved in the book have told me over the years that people often mention Vinyl Will Kill to them, and that they were very proud to be involved in the project. That makes it all worthwhile, producing a book is not for the faint hearted.