



Faculty of Design

2009

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Suggested citation:

Hewgill, Jody (2009) Jody Hewgill. Applied Arts Magazine, 24 (5). pp. 64-67. ISSN 1196-1775 Available at <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/1586/>

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WHEN I STARTED OUT, I was influenced by the Russian constructivists and WPA muralists. Then I discovered Tamara De Lempicka, a Polish art deco artist. Her work was monumental and quite iconic. I was drawn to how she depicted women. I also saw that in Diego Rivera's work. And I liked Pablo Picasso's Blue Period. There's a solidness to his figures—the work is all sculptural and 2D.

Eventually I began doing my own thing, without being influenced by anybody. I just explore the figures and allow things to be more stylized. I don't feel chained by our actual anatomy or what's real. My style keeps evolving as I discover new things. I don't know where it is going but the good thing is that it is not static. I try to bring a certain mood to the work, something that hopefully resonates with the viewer on an emotional level.

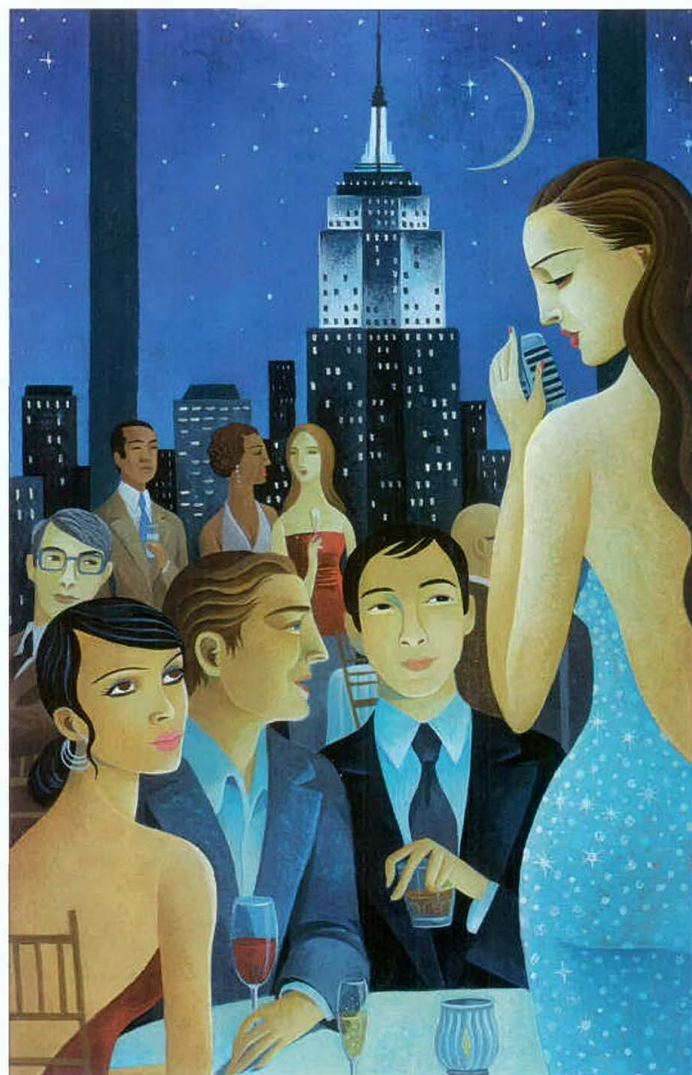


A lot of illustrators right now are drawing, incorporating this into the computer and digitally colouring it. That certainly makes things a lot easier. But my work tends to be labour intensive, building layer upon layer with acrylics. I think there is something to be said for art that is still tangible. I know that when I send paintings to people they like that they can hold it and that it has been created by hand. As we become increasingly digital, I think these kinds of objects are going to become more important to us.

For the last two years, I have taught illustration courses at the Ontario College of Art & Design. I was really reluctant at first, because I hate public speaking. But I also like to push myself—what you are afraid of is what you need to embrace. The first year was really hard; I had some challenging students. But the last

<above, from left> "Portrait of a Lady with Fox": Self-promotion, acrylic on wood panel. Élu wine label for St. Supéry Vineyards & Winery. Design: Melanie Doherty Design. <opposite, clockwise from top> "The Mad Pantheist": Gallery work, acrylic on wood panel. Portrait of Kirsten Dunst as Marie Antoinette for Los Angeles Magazine. AD: Lisa Lewis. Tender Morsels book cover for Knopf. AD: Isabel Warren-Lynch.





year was great: I really enjoyed myself. I always start a session saying, "I hope you learn something from me, but I also want to learn something from you." They are a different generation and have a different spin on their experience with pop culture.

I try to teach students to have a tougher skin. You might have an idea that you love but the client will say no and want to go in another direction. And you'll be heartbroken. Somehow, as a professional, you have to put that aside, go back to the drawing board and find a solution. What I tell myself is that this is illustration, not my fine art, and I've got to solve the problem somehow.

It's a tough market and I know that some of my students are scared. I tell them to not feel that they have to be bound to the style they graduate with; it's an evolving process. When I graduated from OCA myself, I did pen and ink drawings with watercolour

washes ovetop. I wanted to get editorial work but the ADs turned me down and said that what I did was more suited for advertising. At first I was crushed and then I sat down and reinvented myself. So I tell my students, you may not work as an illustrator when you first leave school. I spent my first two years in a design firm. But as long as you know where you want to go and keep working towards it, then it will happen.

Down the road, I'd like to do more gallery work. I would like to explore things beyond 2D and print, like theatre set design. I have a real feeling for theatre after doing 11 years of posters for Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. Animation would also be fun.

It's funny what I've wound up doing. I'm not the kind to sit still, yet I have created this job for myself where I sit at a desk drawing and painting all day. Maybe it's therapy for me. :)

<above, from left> Brochure image for the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute. Design: Douglas Joseph Partners. Invitation for Manhattan Theatre Club's winter benefit. Agency: SpotCo. AD: Greg Coleman. <opposite, clockwise from top> "Putin's New Evil Empire": For Standpoint magazine. AD: Ingrid Shields. For a Windstar Cruises brochure. Design: Besser Design. "The Roman Spring of Mr. Morrissey": For Spin magazine. AD: Devin Pedzwater.

