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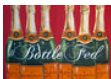
PEEK INSIDE ARTIST ALFRED STEINER'S MESMERIZING STUDIO

All Photos: Anthony Humphreys and Matthew Albanese

POSTED ON 5/13/14
BY [JOE MCGAULEY](#)

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Stepping inside artist [Alfred Steiner](#)'s Manhattan studio is a bit like stepping into the laboratory of a paintbrush-wielding mad scientist. His watercolor work — which has earned him gallery shows around the world — consists mostly of characters and pop culture mainstays, awesomely and absurdly pieced together from a hodgepodge of photo-real body parts, animals, and found objects. We stopped by to talk inspiration and fast food mascots, and to find out how how he parlayed a career in copyright law into the one he has now. We even got an early look at a few never-before-seen pieces he'll be showing later this year.



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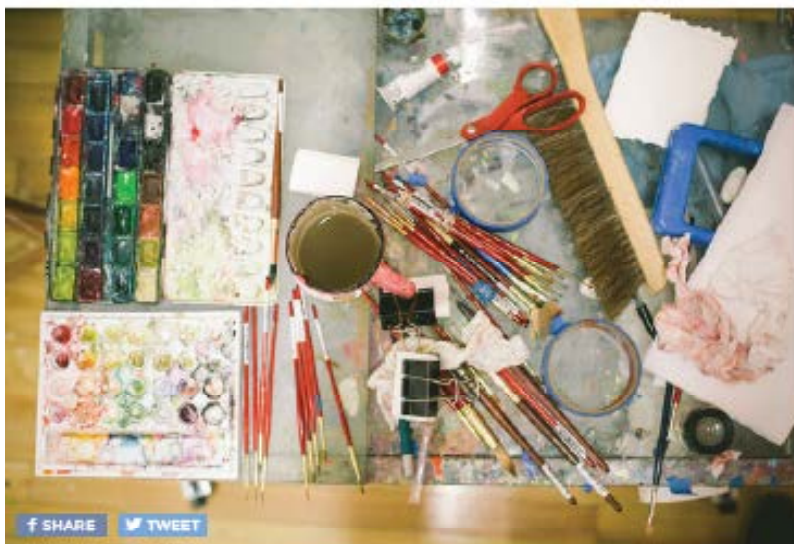
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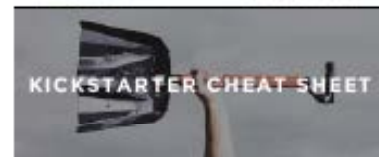
Nestled behind several swinging doors in the back of the Chelsea loft he shares with his wife and kids, Steiner's studio is a colorful, comfortable, and rowdy space that reeks of creativity. It's impossible to walk in any direction without stumbling into something strangely interesting, whether it be a life-sized human skeleton, shiny motorcycle jacket, fellingating turds, or a pile of *Finding Nemo* stuffed animals.



While art's always been a major influence and hobby of his, Steiner didn't choose it as a career path at first. In fact, he has a degree from Harvard Law School and practiced intellectual property law for seven years, until his success in the art world allowed him to shift gears full time. This is some of his early line illustration work, which would eventually evolve into the signature style he's become known for.



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Right now he's working on an upcoming exhibition, which will focus heavily on iconic logos and branding. Can you tell what's what?



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On average, each one of them — an amalgam of illustrations inspired by photos and images he often sources from the Internet — takes about a week and a half to complete.





This one — which likely won't be a part of the upcoming show — actually features the characters from the Nickelodeon cartoon [Sanjay and Craig](#) and was commissioned by the show's creator, who's a big fan.



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Yet another example of him turning everyday objects on their heads, this "bubble wrap" is actually a big sheet of glass, and would require a whole bounty of actual b-wrap to arrive unscathed in the mail.





This is part of a series in which he displays cairns that he reconstructs after collecting them from actual wilderness routes. He's particularly fascinated by how they straddle the borderline of nature and culture.



Also from an earlier series, he calls this "Heavy Handed." It's a lead cast of his hand in the universal "I'm in charge, suckas" formation.

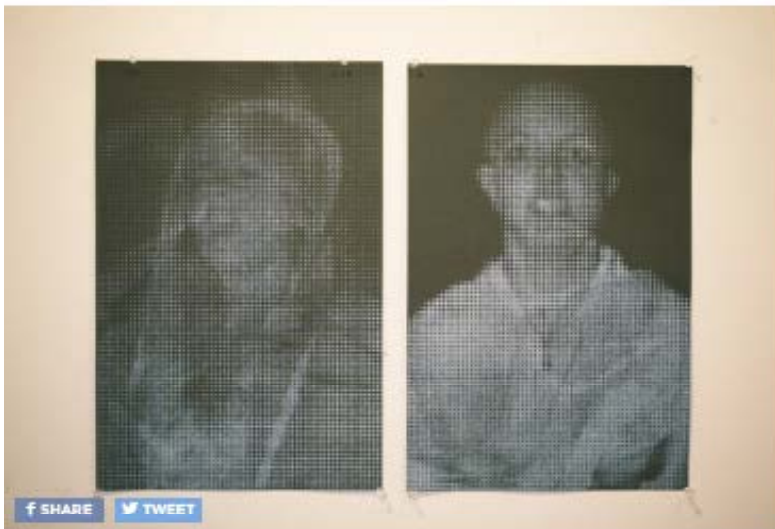




Straddling the line between art and function, his "Anti-Paparazzi" jacket not only looks badass (it was modeled after [the one Marion Brando wears in *The Wild One*](#)), but also packs a punch against aggressive photographers.



It's cut from a special retroreflective material that, when hit by a camera flash, completely blows out the image. Were this to hit shelves for real, TMZ would no-doubt throw a sh*t fit.



Similarly, he recreated these two iconic paparazzi shots of [Lindsay Lohan](#) and [Britney Spears](#) using retroreflective ink, so the images appear only when shot with a flash camera. Otherwise, they'd pass for plain pieces of black paper.





This trio of vintage fast food mascot dolls (who are all curiously red-headed) may or may not be seen in an upcoming piece.



And in keeping with the focus on the theme of brand logos and copyright for the upcoming show, he's toying with the idea of irreverently repurposing iconic high fashion labels on clothes. To find out exactly how though, you'll have to wait and see for yourself.

[Joe McGuire](#) is a senior editor for Supercompressor. He is and forever will be creeped out by Ronald McDonald.

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