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ARTIST

Caleb Hahne

INTERVIEW

Caleb Hahne Q&A 06.16.14

Who are you, where are you and what do you do?

I am Caleb Hahne and I am currently in my house melting from this dry Denver heat. I like to think that I make pictures. I've really been interested in calling what I do collaging. Drawing kind of has this preliminary connotation to it, like it's the step before a painting or another type of art making; like a sketch.

Please tell us about your work in your own words...

Well my statement says that My practice involves the utilization of technology and traditional techniques by confronting the allure of a blooming cyber media. Intrigued by the concept of remixing, I integrate traditional means of art making with a contemporary approach by digitally collaging appropriated imagery from textbooks and magazines and then drawing the new compositions. My current body of work involves the material engagement of digital collage, found paper and objects, graphite, ballpoint pen, oil paint, and acetone along with other mixed medias. Basically, all this means is that lately I love

mashing things together. It's how people compose music; I take different elements and try to design them in a composition that fulfills my aesthetic desires.

Was there a particular artist, image, or moment that inspired you to get into drawing/collage/mixed media art?

Well, I went to art school to become an illustrator, and I think one of the biggest things I learned about school, is what I don't want to do; and I learned that I didn't want to become an illustrator. My colleague and friend Lucas McMahon turned me onto collaging as an exercise to just be loose and feel a bit more free in the preliminary/in-between stages of my work. I really fell in love with appropriating images from what felt like an endless supply of material.

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I grew up doing graffiti, and in away collaging was like being 16 again; instead of catching tags on the bus and making a small space mine with a fake name, I was making new images from other peoples property. The problem with collage for me was the amount of time I lost in studio, so I started drawing the compositions. I chose drawing because of the monochromatic end product and also cause i'm not interested in painting. I went to this lecture that Eric Beltz gave and he brought up how if he were shipped to the other side of the world without anything, could he still do what he does today? And the answer is yes, you can draw anywhere.

What is your method... By hand, digital, both or something else?

Everything I draw is based off of a digital or traditional collage. Usually it's a digital collage because I can use the same image as many times as I would like, and also change the scale and orientation of the image. After I come to a conclusion (which usually takes awhile) a line drawing is laid down and from there I make decisions on what needs to be rendered or filled with collaged paper. Right now whats in the studio is a bit of a step away from all my other techniques. I had some printmaking paper leftover and so it got mounted on some birch and tinted with dirty water and ink, which gave it a cool grey, afterwards I rubbed some blue and red pastel onto the surface just to play with color and some

materials I found in the corner. With the grey surface I started a drawing on top with charcoal, but that didn't look how I wanted, so then I tried carbon pencil, and I didn't like that either, so now I'm using watercolor and colored pencil, which I do like. Let's just say that my method is evolving all the time.

Describe your ideal work day?

I usually start working when the sun goes down, I prefer working through the night because of how still it is. Sometimes the city gets too loud and moves too much for me, the night is when I feel less rushed. With that being said, I end up sleeping through the day because of my work schedule, but when I do get up I try to get a good cup of coffee and read on the porch. Afterwards i'll walk around in my studio playing music and looking at old magazines to get me inspired. Eventually I sit down at my drafting table, put my headphones on and start drawing. It's nice when things come together, but lately I've really enjoyed the part of my practice that involves the uncanny or unknown of my work. Letting things happen through the process and coming to unexpected outcomes has been a part of my work day that has kept me interested and lead to new techniques.





What makes you happy?

I have a sticker on my laptop that says "THINGS COULD BE WORSE" and as simple as that is, i'm constantly reminded about how fortunate I am to be able to draw everyday, skateboard to the grocery store, listen to music and be surrounded by other artists. What makes me happy is that I am constantly learning from the great people that I hang out with and that I get to make stuff all the time.

Favourite music to work to?

It changes pretty regularly; one day i'll be listening to King Krule, Sampha, Toro Y Moi, and the next i'll listen to Death Grips, Bones, Ethel Wulf, and throw Prince or Smokey Robinson in the mix. Lately, I either watch movies or shows on Netflix, or go to YouTube and watch Vice.

Cliche, I know, but what inspires you?

My friend Lucas (who I mentioned earlier) says that someone he looks up to is Super Mario because even though he constantly gets squashed, shot down, and defeated, he still keeps fighting for what he wants and who he loves and nothing will stop him. I thought what he said was poetic and inspirational, so I think in a similar way Lucas inspired me because of Super Mario.

As this is the body issue please tell us what is your favourite body part?

I've always loved hands. Holding hands, shaking hands, scratching backs, fighting, waving, flipping someone off; hands display so many different forms of emotion. I make stuff with my hands. I draw hands with my hands. My grandfather is an Ex Marine and second-degree black belt in karate, and all my life he's talked about how even though he's small, he could crush bricks with the tips of his fingers and I believe it. Because I heard this growing up, I find myself looking at hands trying to figure out if they can also break bricks. On a more serious note, hands can cure people in the same way that they can harm them. Hands make people feel comfortable or threatened and there's something about that which I find interesting. I haven't really searched for a deeper reason as to why I'm so interested in the hands, but I don't think I really want to find out, I like the simplicity of it.

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