



Jesse



After these final collaborative drawings were turned into little books and then read aloud 8 minutes ago, I became officially unemployed/summerworld full-time weirdler



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There's plans for a side business called ALL CAPS

Fucking freight elevator in my studio is out again and I have a dismantled show in my car that needs to come 4 floors up. Arrgggh



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On another note while I wait for the elevator to get fixed.

I love this picture of my parents shoe and belt production at a fashion fair in Milan in the early 70ies. I'm sure the Bally people were just totally puzzled by these freakers attached to them

They taught me to be audacious



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Jesse



puzzled by these freakers attached to them

They taught me to be audacious

Also a pinball machine!



The Trepps are designer/merchants? Love that pic. Here are my parents ca. late-70s selling things on the streets in Vancouver



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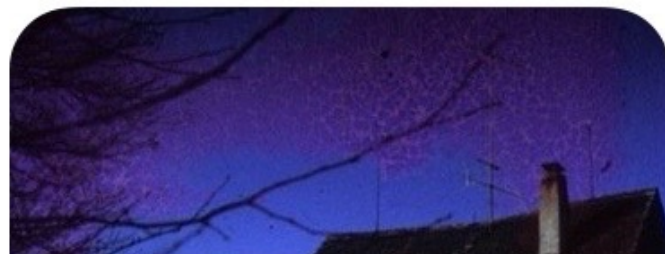




Jesse



Oh wow! Basically the same as my people! We need to talk about this! Do you feel it affects your outlook? Now my mother is a sculptor and painter and my father is an international man of mystery. But when I es growing up they made belts and sandals, quilts, sold food at fairs, made films, basically carneys, also they founded a commune, which is where I grew up



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This is Adler, where I grew up



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My mother and brother

Where your parents
baghwans? Just asking
because of the orange
clothes?

They were! They were
some of his first
western devotees in



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Jesse



They were! They were some of his first western devotees—in Bombay in the early 70s

Tell me about Adler

Wow! I knew tons of bagwhanis and spent some time in their community in toscany

Crazy. At what age?

Adler was Atheist feminist Marxist initially, but became more practical less dogmatic

Toscany, 13 or 14

How many people lived



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How many people lived there? Was it lots of families?

30 adults 12 kids

At least initially, lots of changes all the time. Then completely restructured when I was 10

Families didn't survive

Are you still close with the other kids?

Yes very

And did you guys go to school or was there a built in pedagogy / kid



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Were you raised baghwani?

Not really. My parents were out of that world before I was born, but most of the adults I knew were ex-sannyasins. I was raised spending a lot of time in Hindu and Buddhist temples but in this very open way. Certainly not secular but with this very vast idea of divinity and spiritual practice

Do you still connect spiritually?

I also really loved being with what I came to



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I also really loved being with what I came to realize were a bunch of weirdos, all these adults who were very international and smart and sweet and countercultural that had totally different interests and values than the adults I saw on tv or in airports or wherever people see strangers

Not especially, but I have mostly very fond memories of tear experiences and certainly never had the painful separation I see from kids who were raised religious and



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Jesse



Not especially, but I have mostly very fond memories of tear experiences and certainly never had the painful separation I see from kids who were raised religious and then ... whatever happened that made them punk or political or into artists

A few days ago the sun hit my eye in a blinding illuminating kind of way that made my whole field of vision sort of golden and I was transported to the hanuman temple in Taos where we'd go for their



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Jesse



A few days ago the sun hit my eye in a blinding illuminating kind of way that made my whole field of vision sort of golden and I was transported to the hanuman temple in Taos where we'd go for their annual celebration and hear this all-night song cycle of the hanuman chalisas and I (re)realized how much my interest in singing together, wordy droney, poly-directional was shaped by being a kid taking a sound bath.

How much did you, as a kid, realize the sub/



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How much did you, as a kid, realize the sub/counter-cultural potential (maybe with extra emphasis on the oppositionality) of what you were doing?

I'm atheist, always have been, despite having spent a lot of time around believers.

I think the free art approach you have is what I am attracted to and recognize. Free in the sense of free of need to break down convention, since it never was part of the picture to begin with.



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We were outcasts in the small conservative town the commune was in. In 3rd grade my teacher brought my class to our buildings and told us "this is the house of sin!"

So I was totally aware of not being part of that. But I was totally fine with it, as we had our own society that was much more exciting

Also our parents explicitly pushed us to not conform in school and backed us up when we got into trouble

We were in a sense their



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We were in a sense their tools to reform public school

It is so interesting to see how this influences you. Exposure

Do you have a sense of what the lasting impact was in that town?

How about you? Where you aware of it?

I think it had a lasting impact on society at large. In Switzerland women got their right to vote in 1971. Unmarried people weren't allowed to cohabitate.



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Jesse



I think it had a lasting impact on society at large. In Switzerland women got their right to vote in 1971. Unmarried people weren't allowed to cohabit.

Now it is very progressive, much more progressive than here.

I think about this idea of uniqueness and difference and the times in one's life when they wanted to be apart and when they wanted to be a part. Wanted to / felt forced to be. And I think often about the various ways and times that these levels of



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Jesse



I think about this idea of uniqueness and difference and the times in one's life when they wanted to be apart and when they wanted to be a part. Wanted to / felt forced to be. And I think often about the various ways and times that those levels of difference were really impactful to me. I didn't grow up on a commune or as part of a specific community that was recognizable as outsiders to other people in the same as you did (and other people I knew did), so it was always this feeling of choosing when to be



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I didn't know that Switzerland was so late on those things! I was always think of it as being pretty progressive. Or at least kind of uptight but practical.

But I think I realized very early the sort of revolutionary potential of difference. And felt early on a very strong political and cultural urgency

(Itself based as much on principles of emancipation, equity, love, etc. as a rejection of the obviously not working dominant



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(Itself based as much on principles of emancipation, equity, love, etc. as a rejection of the obviously not working dominant society)

How do you see this expressed in your work?

I don't always know. I think it's a mixture of the things themselves and how they're positioned. I see a direct line between the weirdo northern NM house parties where people would have all their friends out to see the idiosyncratic fence



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I don't always know. I think it's a mixture of the things themselves and how they're positioned. I see a direct line between the weirdo northern NM house parties where people would have all their friends out to see the idiosyncratic fence they made one day at a time by collecting sticks on their daily walks (both as aesthetic practice and subtle resistance against building permits) or the earth ship stupa and the DIY spaces that re-opened and changed my life as a teenager and the artist-run



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and the artist-run spaces and places where I devote a lot of my energies now.

I think about the individual and constituencies, chosen/shared ideas, shibboleths and permeabilities... Some works are clearer than others in some regards. The piece I'm showing at CUFF Friday is — of the longer videos I've made over the past 5ish years — the one that most directly ties the countercultural legacies of the 60s and 70s to some of my other preoccupations (optics.



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What about you?

And has being a parent brought ideas about your own childhood and how it shaped you and your work into sharper relief?

The two main ways it influences my art making are that I believe in experimenting and I'm not sentimental. In regards to the "business" aspect of art, I too am most interested and comfortable in artist run spaces, alternative venues and models. I dislike the gallery model.



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Yes becoming a parent is a mirror of sorts. I'm sorry that I can't provide the same kind of expanded family I had.

But I really like privacy



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Jesse



Yes becoming a parent is a mirror of sorts. I'm sorry that I can't provide the same kind of expanded family I had.

But I really like privacy and solitude and don't desire to live in a large group of people



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Jesse



Can you say more about sentimentality? Or the lack thereof?

In my relationship to material

I like that. I really love the way that one bit from here moves into another bit over there in your work. Some of what I was doing with these kindergarteners was all about that.

Maybe based on showing my college kids your animations!

Making paintings and drawings and then



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Jesse



I like that. I really love the way that one bit from here moves into another bit over there in your work. Some of what I was doing with these kindergarteners was all about that.

Maybe based on showing my college kids your animations!

Making paintings and drawings and then cutting those up and recombining them. But not as fixed collages but as incidental constellations that then went back into the pile of potential



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And also in relationship to ideas, I keep it simple

Often I work in by switching back and forth between intuitive and then formal/editing

Everything in the end needs to find its balance.

I also really try to make art do things for me, solve my problems

Do you throw many things out? Or do they get re-re-re usually?

Well I haven't brought anything in to my studio



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Jesse



Do you throw many things out? Or do they get re-re-re usually?

Well I haven't brought anything in to my studio since 2012. So I keep everything unless it is too small to be of use

I think of my materials as actors in my pieces

I can totally see that! What are some of the problems they can be counted on to help with?

-The decision to only work with what I have,



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-The decision to only work with what I have, makes me need less money amongst many other things
-when the first video iPod came out I really wanted one, so I made a piece that required one
-it is good for my psyche to work away in my studio
-travels

Do you have a set studio schedule?

More or less. It's number one priority to be there. I teach as little as possible



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More or less. It's number one priority to be there. I teach as little as possible

And family of course

But I'm not motivated by money, I'm motivated by having as much control over my time as possible

I'd rather need less than work for others more

Do you?

I feel that. I definitely don't have a set schedule (like I've been doing errands this whole time. Right now



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I feel that. I definitely don't have a set schedule (like I've been doing errands this whole time. Right now at a print shop trimming some future western pole projects) and that's half because I'm into thinking of the world as the studio, blah blah, and because I lack discipline and don't like being told what to do (even by myself)

I think there's something about growing into one's practice that means starting to better own and understand your



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I think there's something about growing into one's practice that means starting to better own and understand your particularities - figuring out how to instrumentalize - and sometimes work against - your own strengths and weaknesses. But I also know that I'm good at justifying my sometimes bad behavior

The way I work, my practice, has changed greatly over the years.

That is part of the idea or question of what



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Jesse



The way I work, my practice, has changed greatly over the years.

That is part of the idea or question of what does my art for me?

I went from a social practice to an antisocial practice

Hah!

Was that intentional?
Gradual?

In response to becoming a parent

I need solitude in my studio, the rest of life is hyper social



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Jesse



In response to becoming a parent

I need solitude in my studio, the rest of life is hyper social

But also it was time for a change. I felt my work was getting too predictable

The main shift is that my hand now is omnipresent.

But what comes out of my studio usually is just a digital file

Photo or video



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Before it was all site specific and collaborative

Installed

But that's the joy of it for me, the discovery that everything always is in flux.

Do you want to talk a bit about your approach to performance?

I've seen you play live video (and see a pretty clear overlap with your animations [both the ones that look similar and the ones that don't]).



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Live video is real time processing of hand drawn animation. Akin to a sampler in audio terms.

It's building an instrument and then getting good at playing

I work 100% improvised

Building and playing my videolah came out of my desire to participate in musical performance, in particular improvised performance.

The studio based work is different as it is slower to produce, making hand drawn animation marker on paper takes time, so does stop motion

The animations condense large chunks of time. Performing expands.

But the animations are similarly improvised, i don't have a script other than a basic formal premise, like the animation is a 360 degree rotation that resolves seamlessly

I really like that animation / performance expansion / condensation idea.

And as a non-musician who's spent a lot of times in music communities (and being especially excited by improvisation), this is really exciting.

I've done some live video things but your method sounds more sophisticated (or unique) than what I've done.



Jesse



I've tried to think more about how improvisation and composition can work together in non-musical settings. Like I've don't some reading-y performances where I have a lot of text and decide in the moment what's read, what's sung, what's made up wholly in the moment, what order things happen

For me the performance aspect of life really is about my desire to experience the immediacy musicians experience



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Like a musician who knows their craft to a level where they can improvise like how we can talk

Yeah

I've felt that a lot

Yes, like getting to the point of being so one with the instrument, being fluid and in the moment

Also means listening looking paying attention

Not rigid

In spectralina I sing a lot



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In spectralina I sing a lot lately and that is really interesting. Not always good, but every once in a while something completely unexpected and beautiful comes out.

It's good to do this thing that's a bit humiliating.

In the sense that in order for magic to happen I have to take risks and that doesn't always pay off

I was lucky to have a weekly gig performing every Tuesday with some incredible



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Jesse



I was lucky to have a weekly gig performing every Tuesday with some incredible musicians for 8 years. It allowed me to develop

The skills

Love that risk/magic thing. I also think part of the magic of improvising and performing has to do with it being in front of people. The different stakes and energy exchange can shift what we're doing. I think that's part of I think is so envious about music.

I really like when artists



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I really like when artists use exhibitions as a chance to experiment too.

It requires a kind of confidence - that this won't be the last show or something - to be able to practice in public, but I think something really special can happen there

Yes.

In the best case it opens up dialogue and inspiration. It is putting trust into the audience

Delivered



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difference were really impactful to me. I didn't grow up on a commune or as part of a specific community that was recognizable as outsiders to other people in the same as you did (and other people I knew did), so it was always this feeling of choosing when to be "in" or "out"

I didn't know that Switzerland was so late on those things! I was always think of it as being pretty progressive. Or at least kind of uptight but practical.



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