

ARTIST | EDUCATOR

of THE YEAR

2011

PAUL DALLAS

WE'RE DELIGHTED TO BRING YOU THIS YEAR'S CROP OF DISTINGUISHED ILLUSTRATORS. FOR THOSE WHO STUDY ILLUSTRATION, YOU'LL NOTICE MANY FAMILIAR NAMES AND YOU'LL BEAR WITNESS TO SOME OF THE FINEST NEW TALENT TO COME ALONG IN YEARS. ILLUSTRATORS WORLDWIDE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE DRAMATIC VISUAL SOLUTIONS TO EVEN THE MOST MUNDANE SUBJECTS. PICK UP ALMOST ANY PUBLICATION AND YOU'LL SEE MORE NEW NAMES THAN PERHAPS ANY TIME IN THE PAST. SLOWLY BUT SURELY ART DIRECTORS HAVE A NEWFOUND APPRECIATION OF ILLUSTRATION, THEY REALIZE THAT ILLUSTRATION NEEDS TO BE IN EVERY ART DIRECTOR'S TOOLBOX ALONG WITH PHOTOGRAPHY AND TYPOGRAPHY. THEY'VE FOUND THAT CERTAIN VISUAL SOLUTIONS CAN ONLY BE ILLUSTRATED AND THEREFORE THE SEARCH FOR TALENT HAS TAKEN ON A NEW EMPHASIS. AND IT'S NOT LIMITED TO A NATION'S BOUNDARIES, YOUR NEXT ILLUSTRATOR IS JUST AN EMAIL OR TWEET AWAY. ANOTHER GOOD SIGN: MORE NEW MONOGRAPHS ON CONTEMPORARY ILLUSTRATORS HAVE COME OUT IN 2011 THAN EVER BEFORE. THAT RENAISSANCE OF ILLUSTRATION WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IS LEGITIMATE. AND DESPITE A WEAK ECONOMY ILLUSTRATORS GROW AND PROSPER ALL OVER THE WORLD. OUR RECENT 3X3 INCOME SURVEY REPORTED THAT TOP ILLUSTRATOR INCOME WAS COMPARABLE WITH THE CREATIVE COUNTERPARTS IN ADVERTISING AND DESIGN AND IN SOME CASES FAR SURPASSES IT. ANOTHER GOOD SIGN THAT ILLUSTRATION IS HEALTHY AND VIBRANT. IF YOU'RE NEW TO ILLUSTRATION THEN SIT BACK AND VIEW SOME OF THE BEST WORK OF THE YEAR; IF YOU'RE A FAN, CONSIDER YOURSELF PERCIPIENT TO HAVE BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF DISCOVERY. THE REST OF THE WORLD IS FINALLY CATCHING UP. *ENJOY* —THE PUBLISHER



PAUL DALLAS IS A SERIOUS ARTIST, *illustrator and educator yet every time I see him he makes me laugh. His sardonic wit never fails to see the lighter side of things, his keen observations and his flawless delivery always leave me in stitches. Few illustrators are naturally funny, in fact only two come to mind. Unfortunately where there is comedy there is usually tragedy as well. Paul's mother and especially his late sister were great influences on his search for an artistic identity. And what a journey. It's remarkable to me that he was making Super 8 stop-frame animation as a teen, that he produced community cable television as a youngster. That the work of the self-styled illustrators in the UK led him to the path of illustration. He'll tell you that he had a great start as an illustrator gaining assignments right and left while still a student; he'll also admit that he missed exactly what university is supposed to provide. That's why he left it all behind to study at the Royal College of Art in London, there he allowed himself to experiment and grow. But the real work began when he tried to rejoin the illustration community—he was zigging when everyone else was zagging. When everyone had one style, he had many and when the trend became many styles he's settled on one successful recurring personal vision. Asked what's next, his wish list includes a sabbatical with one necessary element: Mediterranean light. It is our pleasure to name Paul Dallas our 3x3 Illustrator : Educator of the Year, 2011.* —THE PUBLISHER

Q Did you always want to be an artist? Do you come from an artistic family?

A My father, who conducted himself like a member of the Rat Pack, but unlike Frank Sinatra, made a living running a greasy spoon, provided a steady supply of dry cleaner's shirt cardboard for me to draw on as a child. But more importantly, his influence was the endless parade of colorful people to whom I was introduced. Diner regulars like the elderly woman who wore a soiled beauty pageant sash or the club bouncer who acted as my sitter must have shaped me in some tragic, artistic way. By the time I was 9 though, my dad had moved out and I grew up with my mother, sister, grandmother, uncle, aunt and eventually cousin, all under the same roof. My mother and sister were the ones with talent, who supported my creativity. My mother, I was told, had potential as a fashion designer but was denied an education by her father. Subsequently, she became a 'Sunday Painter', using our washer-dryer as an easel between cycles. But my sister, Chris, who was 3 years older, was really the one who paved the road for me. She spent all her spare time drawing and painting, so I did too trying to keep up, copying from *Mad Magazine*, and from photos of movie stars and rock bands, before attempting original work. As a teenager, I made Super 8 stop-frame animation, produced community cable TV, and was awarded a scholarship from the Art Gallery of Ontario to take classes on weekends. I did well in high school with math and English, was elected valedictorian, but it was the mystery of visual arts that was most

meaningful to me. Part of that mystery unfortunately, was how I could survive as an artist in Canada. It was my art teacher who recommended the Ontario College of Art, which was widely considered the leading institution for aspiring professionals.

Q What were some of your early influences? Other artists you admired? That you admire today?

A Album art played a big role. For hours, I would pore over two great books (*The Album Cover Album*, *Walk Away René*) by Hipgnosis, the agency responsible for Pink Floyd covers. It looked like such a cool job that I told my college admissions interviewer, that I planned to design covers for a living, not realizing it was graphic design. He didn't bother correcting me, and so now I'm an illustrator. As one might expect, I also admired pop artists, realists and surrealists, but perhaps less typical for a teenager was my interest in conceptual art and Marcel Duchamp. In art school, Francis Bacon stood out as a leading influence, but now my scope of appreciation is so wide that it's almost impossible to narrow down.

Q What were your early impressions of illustration?

A Illustration, I suspect, is hidden in plain sight for most people. I didn't notice it either, nor did I aspire to it, until I discovered the self-styled "Radical Illustrators" who emerged from the UK in the late 1970s: Sue Coe, Russell Mills, Ian Pollock, Robert Mason, Anne Howeson and George Snow. Their work derived from a punk ethos that was iconoclastic and uncompromising, and in my view, forever changed illustration for the better.

Q How did you get your first big break?

A Because I was eager to be published, I took my portfolio around during my second year of art school. To my delight, commissions started rolling in immediately, so I arranged an independent study with the program chair where I would earn credit for published work. It seemed ideal until my graduating year when I realized I had worked primarily under commercial constraints and had missed the ivory tower experience. So I headed off to grad school overseas to get the freedom I needed. When I returned, I found it surprisingly hard to re-enter the market, my head swimming with interesting but perhaps impractical ideas. And then my sister died, derailing me for a considerable time. It threw me into a period of writing and endless experimentation, where every commission was executed radically different from the rest. It wasn't until my wife, Jill, retrieved one of these experiments from a garbage can that I saw something worth pursuing in my own work. I entered a piece in *American Illustration*, it won, and others followed, attracting more gratifying commissions. So, I was in fact, both quick out of the gate and a slow starter.

Q Why go to the Royal College of Art in London?

A The "Radical Illustrators" graduated from the RCA and so did David Hockney, Ridley Scott, and other artists I admired. It was regarded as the world's foremost postgraduate art college and I was flattered to be accepted as one of only eight illustration students. Also, Francis Bacon had a long history with the school. As it turned out, I lived in his neighborhood in South Kensington and would see him regularly on the street and at the local post office. To this day, I can't look at one of his distorted self-portraits without picturing him licking a stamp.

Q Did you start out to become a fine artist or illustrator or animator?

A I thought highly of the potential of Illustration,

considered it an art form, and so I regarded myself as an artist, but rarely called myself one, mainly to avoid arguing with fine artists who understood "illustration" only as a derogatory term. "Illustrator" was—as it is now—a misnomer and at the time I recall comparing it to another profession, "actor", whose title is also a misnomer—the underlying Stanislavski principle being "don't act, be." But I didn't convince anyone. So, now my attitude is to make distinctions between art and artwork, and not artist and illustrator. The

final individual product, based on context, criteria, and whether it meets, transcends or falls short of its intentions is all that matters. Whatever secret or public identity keeps you producing is worth keeping.

Q Have you ever considered an artist representative?

A At a time when I had two disparate bodies of work that were winning recognition, a well-known New York rep called asking if I'd be interested in joining her agency. Unfortunately though, she was not interested in the body of work I preferred

and after a long discussion, while she loudly chomped away at her lunch, I respectfully declined, and she presumably finished a fantastic sandwich. I was initially disappointed but I got over it fast. A week later, I was awarded a significant commission for the work she wanted me to abandon. In the end, I think it's really up to the chemistry and respect between people and that there are advantages and disadvantages alike in working with a rep. I've just been too busy to pursue it.

Q You were a partner in a design firm, Zero Thru 9, what type of work were you doing there?

A Jill and I started Zero Thru 9 in 1996 to deal with a sudden rush of freelance graphic design work she was commissioned. We worked together on a gamut of projects including packaging for beer companies, designs for postage stamps, and art direction for





Gage, working together, while also teaching, became even more difficult, so we phased out Zero Thru 9. Occasionally though, I do get to work for her new company, Rare Bird.

Q How did you start working in animation?

A I had just completed a print campaign for the Partnership for a Drug-Free America when the creative director innocently remarked that my posters would make great television commercials. So I sent him three quick unsolicited storyboards that day, each no bigger than a letter size page to show I was capable but not desperate. I didn't hear immediately back from him and so I forgot all about it. Then unexpectedly weeks later, I received a call from a newly formed animation company, PSYOP. Todd Mueller, a former MTV producer, pitched an animation process he wanted to explore where key drawings were laser carved out of glass, filled and flushed with ink, filmed and digitally manipulated. He wanted me to supply key frames for three commercials. It sounded great. The only problem was the deadline. I had a weekend. So, I borrowed a beginner's book on animation from the library, which had a walk cycle of a cute duck or happy clown, and adapted it to a corpse. It was all done by hand, ink on typewriter paper with the help of a makeshift light table, and couriered as a fat envelope of hardcopies. We communicated during the early animatics stage and after 30 days, two 30-second spots were completed and aired on the Big Three networks.

Q Given a choice which do you prefer, 2-D illustration or animation?

A Illustration definitely, but would love to do more collaborative work with animators.

Q What do you see as the potential in the field of animation for young illustrators?

A First of all, I don't think animation will supplant illustration, as some predict will happen as a result of online periodicals and interactive media. No one is suggesting all photographers become filmmakers. There is a reason why still images are so poignant. They deliver information in an instant while encouraging active contemplation. Illustration simply functions differently than animation. Having said that, one has to acknowledge that the core narrative competencies and draftsmanship required of both disciplines makes animation attractive to many illustrators. But this is where illustration students need to be cautioned: when branching off into this area, a bifurcation of the profession exists. One offshoot leads to being an animator in the full and familiar sense of the term, typically animating in whatever style the individual project requires, potentially not your own, while the other is an extension of one's singular, recognizable illustration portfolio, placing you if not in the role of animator, than as a creative director, concept artist or writer.



Q Comparing your work you're doing today with when you were first starting out, how is it different?

A I used every medium from airbrush to egg tempera, candle smoke to collage, with the only consistent element being my sensibility. I didn't mind that it was like marketing a personality disorder, because miraculously I had the support of art directors. It was in fact the comments from peers questioning my artistic integrity that were disturbing. Illustrators, like 'pure' artists, were supposed to have a signature style. And I didn't. Now ironically, everything is the other way around. The expectation is for artists to change their work dramatically from show to show, employing diverse media and techniques. Meanwhile, I have deliberately held onto a single look. Like that old lady in the pageant sash.

Q When I look at your work it seems so serious yet in our conversations you have a really great sense of humor. What keeps your work on the serious side?

A Where there's integrated text, it is usually meant to be funny, or at least sardonic, and run counter to the stark image. So I'm either failing miserably, or the image is just stronger. Maybe it's the same

principle behind those pharmaceutical TV ads where the narrator's warning of incontinence and other side effects is eclipsed by the image of a guy happily playing golf in Sansabelt slacks.

Q Talk with us a bit about your process?

A I reduce a manuscript or brief to a one-sentence précis and illustrate that. I aim for an idea that is a standalone image that a viewer will "get" even without the text. Not a direct translation, but a visual accompaniment. I provide one or two linears in clean black line, preferring to submit a few refined ideas rather than multiple thumbnails, which can lead to prolonged indecision between art director and editor. The final art is executed on illustration board in watercolor and bleach, painted very spontaneously, never reworked and only worked in Photoshop to the extent of removing the white board's grain.

Q Your work looks like it's done on acetate, is this choice of surface due to your interest in animation?

A It's illustration board, not acetate, but thanks for the idea.

Q Any favorite projects and/or clients?

A I've had the privilege of working with so many great people that I can't single anyone out in particular. Most of the work I've been getting lately has been business oriented so when a more cultural piece comes along, I enjoy it more. There's also an annual fund-raising auction that I help organize and participate in at OCAD called Project 31 that's close to my heart. The funds go to enhance students' experience by providing scholarships and other resources.

Q What do you think about the current state of illustration?

A The current state seems to be a state of flux. More people are in, or are passing through, illustration than ever before, perhaps because the attraction of reaching a large audience with pictures has never been stronger. At the core of the very best work, regardless of the medium or forum, is the ability to communicate with a personal voice. Unfortunately however, there are too many illustrators for whom illustration only equates with a popular style—a problem I think is amplified by the internet, where anything can be posted, including a derivative portfolio. To a world that seems less and less respectful of originality and copyright, a sure way to hasten the profession's



demise is to cannibalize it. We need to preserve and advance our contribution to society by respecting each other and securing our roles as shapers of culture. If competition in the traditional markets is too high, illustrators need to find new opportunities to be seen, and the best ones may be the ones they create for themselves through authorship, entrepreneurship, self-publish-

ing, and exhibitions.

Q Let's talk about your experiences as a teacher, what do you feel the role is of an instructor?

A To help students optimize their potential and find a life that revolves around something they love is nothing short of sublime. To accomplish this in a studio environment, an instructor needs to quickly assess how students perceive and understand the world. It sounds like a ridiculous thing to say, but much is revealed in the intimacy of discussing concepts. With that information, you can determine who best responds to what impetus and develop a creative environment where everyone is learning from each other. If done correctly, the pleasure of learning for students extends beyond the classroom and stays with them for life.

Q Do you feel there is anything missing in today's education of an illustrator?

A As a program chair, I'm routinely asking myself that question. Speaking only from my experience at OCAD University, we concluded some time ago that our students, although well prepared creatively for editorial, book and advertising markets needed a more robust education in generating their own



projects. And so in 2006—in anticipation of the changes to our profession—I created a unique undergraduate thesis course. Based on a statement of intent and rigorous practice-based research, our students investigate a single original concept and new working methodologies, participate in 4–5 hour “mega-crits” where all sixty or so students are in attendance, and produce bodies of work that are cohesive, insightful and compelling. Concurrent to this course, are drawing and painting studios, media classes, business studies, interdisciplinary electives, and liberal arts and sciences. All, once synthesized, are intended to arm graduates with a breadth as well as depth of knowledge, a professional level portfolio, a bachelor of design degree and has frequently been the case, prestigious industry awards.

Q What are your responsibilities as OCAD University’s chair of illustration?

A I wish it were all about playing the “visionary” and posing heroically, but the reality is that I design the curriculum, write all the syllabi, review course outlines, hire, orientate, support and review faculty, interview admission applicants, advise students, organize lectures and events, mount shows, arrange competitions, intervene on grievances, oversee facilities, make budget requests, and produce program audits. While on a university-wide level, I help develop academic policies, participate in strategic planning, and assist in marketing. I also lead and teach the thesis course.

Q What do you look for when hiring a new instructor?

A Most of our instructors are distinguished working illustrators, artists or designers but that alone isn’t why they’re effective in the classroom. We look for applicants who have a firm understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and history of the discipline, in addition to practical knowledge, experience and

currency. They must communicate and collaborate well, be engaging, and complement the strengths of the program faculty.

Q What is your advice to graduates entering the field?

A Once students leave the structure and social aspect of university for the solitary life of a freelancer, it’s easy for them to feel alienated and lose momentum, or even faith in themselves. That’s why it remains vital not only to stay connected, but also to continually create new connections. In one sense of the word, we are trained as illustrators to do this, matching image to text, or symbol to meaning in our work. Our minds are

predisposed to find and value connections. It should then seem natural to apply this way of thinking to relationships with audiences, clients, art directors and peers.

Q Final words to teachers?

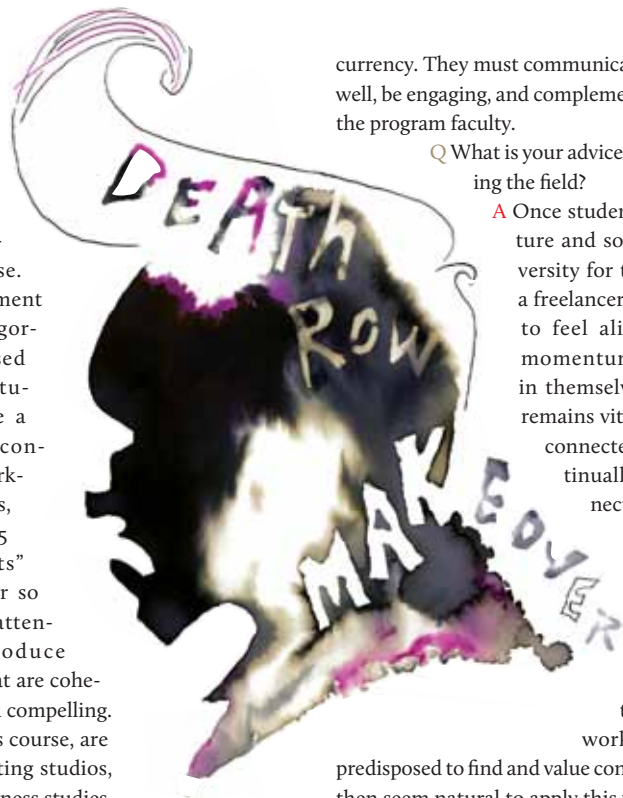
A I think we have to continually question our own authority. Does our advice apply? To every student? To five years down the road? I already feel a wave a doubt about my advice to stay connected, and that was only a moment ago. I just recalled that a recent graduate sequestered herself in a lighthouse in Iceland and emerged with a book. One could argue that it disproves my point about connectivity. But on the other hand, it also conveniently proves my point about advice.

Q Final words to practicing illustrators?

A I’ve been a steadfast believer in what we illustrators mean to culture and I have the brilliant work of my colleagues to thank for that. It’s our willingness to grow individually as artists that deepens our contribution as a whole.

Q And finally, what’s in your future, personally and professionally?

A At some point, I’m going to take a sabbatical to work on a personal project, most likely a sequential piece, and because I love to travel, am going to do my best to justify the need for Mediterranean light. Also, my wife says we are getting a dog, but my trust in her judgment, albeit firm, is not absolute.



MEDALISTS

PROFESSIONAL SHOW

Best of Show

16

Gold

18

Silver

24

Bronze

34

CHILDREN’S SHOW

Best of Show

46

Gold

48

Silver

52

Bronze

60

STUDENT SHOW

Best of Show

72

Gold

74

Silver

76

Bronze

78