



nathan jurevicius

<http://nathanj.com.au>

One of the main things that distinguishes animation from other moving image forms is its visual qualities: the way that the everyday can be subverted and made into something that is neither real nor unreal. Nathan Jurevicius has branched out from editorial illustration into the world of animation and toy design, a move that has given him free reign to explore new territories while maintaining his surreal stylistic preoccupations.

ACMI's Rachel Nagy asks Jurevicius about the things that have inspired his work, how he relates to the animation process as an illustrator, and ideas he hopes to explore in the future.

Rachel: Now, you are primarily from an illustration background - what made you decide to pursue animation?

Nathan: I've always been in love with cartoons and still watch the shows on ABC Kids whenever I get a chance. Animation is a natural extension to a static illustration, especially if your style lends itself well to being animated. I think I first seriously got into it about five years ago when I was playing around with some crude stop motion stuff using paper.

Rachel: Were you working in other mediums prior to shifting your work online? What inspired you to use the Web?



Image: **How Quest Sought the Truth**, director/illustrator/animation (with Loressa Clisby): Nathan Jurevicius, 2002. See it at http://nathanj.com.au/meat/st_fun.htm

Nathan: I'm mainly an editorial illustrator but have played around with sculpture and photography. The Web kind of hit me around the same time as I got into animation. I was really inspired by some little rollovers I saw someone doing in Dreamweaver and thought how cool it would be to make up a web page featuring heaps of fun little moving gifs of brains and skulls ... I then discovered Javascript timelines and then Flash (Version 3 at the time) ...

Rachel: Is there anyone or anything that has had a particular impact on your work?

Nathan: I'm a big fan of Miro and Jim Flora. Miro diversified into so many areas, he's a real inspiration. Jim is just plain cool! Miro's simplistic but very graphic style is a great inspiration not only to me but to many illustrators who have a retro feel to their work. Jim Flora was probably one of the first guys to combine the whole miro/pop art thing into his album covers for Jazz records and the mix of the two created a fresh and lively look to all his art ... this was the kind of thing I wanted to do.

Rachel: What kind of tools or programs do you use to animate?

Nathan: Everything is pencil drawn first. Then worked over in Illustrator and then Flash is used for the actual animation. Sometimes Photoshop is used for special effects.

Rachel: What is your process for creating an animated piece?



Image: **Tepozton**, director/illustrator: Nathan Jurevicius, 2001. See it at http://nathanj.com.au/meat/st_fun.htm

Nathan: Lots of thinking, pencil sketches, storyboard thumbnails. The first thing is probably character design as it's the most fun and really gets me going. Once the storyboard and characters have been finalised everything is worked up in Illustrator and later imported into Flash to be broken up into arms, legs, head etc. Background usually come last. Sound sort of happens during the entire process.

Rachel: Do you have a favourite animated

work? Why this work?

Nathan: If you're talking about other people's work then one of my favourites would be the *Duckman* series [directors: Peter Avanzino, Anthony Bell II, 1994-1997]. It has so many cool characters and the timing is brilliant ... please put it back on TV ... my late nights are not the same.

Rachel: If you could animate your own version of any film ever made, what would it be and why?

Nathan: I love these sorts of questions! Like 'if you had a million dollars and had to spend it in a day what would you do?' ... um ... well ... okay. Maybe the *Three Colours* series [*Three Colours: Blue*, Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1993; *Three Colours: Red*, Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1994; *Three Colours: White*, Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1994] would be an amazing set of films to do my own animated version to, though the fairly recent film *World Traveller* [director: Bart Freundlich, 2001] has a great concept - imagine all the quirky characters you could invent and the different locations ... hmmm ... oh, *The Shining* [director: Stanley Kubrick, 1980] would be so cool - the scene in the hallway ... sheesh ... or maybe ... um ... I think I'm taking this question waaaay too serious.

Rachel: What kind of collaborations do you use in the production of your work?



Image: *I Love You to Bits*, director/illustrator: Nathan Jurevicius, 2003. See it at on the [Winged Sandals website](http://www.sandals.com.au/winged).

Nathan: Sound is a big thing I get other people to do. I usually have ideas of what I want to have and even lyrics but sometimes you've got to leave it to the pro's ... my brother, Luke just finished the music for an ABC animation I've been working on ... the same goes for animation - there are people who are far better at actually animating my stuff so I trust their skills. The only thing I'm really particular about is the look and feel - I have to be in total control of how it's illustrated and so therefore do all this side myself.

Rachel: As someone who is mostly concerned with the artistic side of things, what are your thoughts on programming?

Nathan: Leave it to the programmers.

Rachel: You recently released the game *Kelman to the Rescue* as part of the ABC and Film Victoria's Game On initiative. Tell us a bit about the experiences you had while creating this work!

Nathan: This was such a fun project that involved a lot of really nice people. I asked Spiderbait to do the music, Dylan Lewis to voice the whole thing and my friend Ash Ringrose to program it all. It was very painless and gave me an opportunity to explore different themes and characters in my work.



Image: *Kelman to the Rescue*, director/illustrator/ animator: Nathan Jurevicius. See it at <http://www.abc.net.au/gameon/kelman/default.htm>

Rachel: Is there any reason why cats feature in so many of your works? Were you inspired by a particular feline?

Nathan: Growing up we had so many cats ... i'm sure they've made a lasting impression on me (especially a freaky kitten we had named Igor that lasted about three weeks before he was taken back to the shop ... don't ask).

Rachel: In addition to your illustration work and animation, you are also collaborating with a Hong Kong toy company to design toys. How did this come about? Any plans for a Scary Girl cartoon series?

Nathan: Last year I received a phone call from a guy who'd been following my artwork for a while. He asked if I was interested in doing toys - he'd cover the costs and promote me and all I had to do was design them ... not a bad arrangement. Since then our fruits can be seen at <http://www.scarygirl.com/>

A Scarygirl cartoon series - wow, you must have been reading my mind ... in fact, I'm shortly going to be developing a bunch of materials to present to potential production studios ... there's actually already been a number of local and international parties that have approached me to turn Scarygirl into a series (at this stage though I really want to make sure we do it right and not rush into anything) ... so stay tuned!

Rachel: Do you have any advice for any illustrators wanting to get into animation?

Nathan: If you want to do it yourself then get a copy of Flash and go for it. It's a really easy program for non tech-head illustrators who just want to make fun little moving stories using their artwork.

Rachel: What is the future of online animation for you?

Nathan: I think flip books would be cool (like those little mini animations you do with a phone book and draw stick figures doing star jumps) only the paper would be wafer thin sheets of LCD screen and you'd then post the finished product online and people could virtually flick the pages and ... um ... actually I don't know (but it sounded cool don't you think?)

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