

MY FAVORITE  
**SHAPES**  
by julio torres

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INTERVIEW

# Julio Torres On 'My Favorite Shapes,' Daisy Duck and His Advice For A Rhombus

BY KATLA MCGLYNN

*In My Favorite Shapes, Julio Torres deconstructs the traditional stand-up special with crystals, toys and miniature furniture. But, what does he think about trapezoids?*

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In his first hour-long comedy special, [My Favorite Shapes](#), comedian and [Los Espookys](#) star and creator Julio Torres explores his various objects of affection in a way no comedian ever has: via futuristic conveyor belt.

Taking observational comedy to another level, Torres, a writer for *Saturday Night Live*, gives personality to such inanimate objects as an oval who wishes he were a circle, the curtain that separates first class and coach, and a stiletto-shaped display for a miniature stiletto collection ("I am what happens when no one says no," Torres deadpans.)

In a conversation with HBO, Torres shares the one bit that didn't make the cut, the toys and cartoons that inspired him as a kid, and even gives his thoughts on a few shapes on the spot (On the rhombus: "A square that took a chance.") Read below and watch *My Favorite Shapes* by Julio Torres [On Demand](#).

**You cover a pretty huge variety of “Shapes” in this special. Were there any that didn’t make the cut?**

I was actually surprised when we were editing that there was only one piece of the special that we had to cut—and it breaks my heart, because they were some of the prettiest objects. It was a collection of miniature furniture for a “flea soap opera” that included a fireplace (for fleas to burn letters), a long, regal dining table (for fleas to give menacing toasts to each other), a tiny fountain and even a grand, little staircase.

**What were your favorite toys to play with as a kid?**

I was very into most any little figurine, like a Disney figurine, and I would just sort of recast their parts and come up with little stories for them. Then my mom would make me little cardboard doll houses. I also loved those little toy cars that you'd buy at a gas station or see at a checkout counter. One of my favorite games was just lining them all up in a long, long row—because I had so many—and moving them inch-by-inch every now and then and saying that they were stuck in traffic.

**You made traffic fun!**

To me, it was so funny that they didn't know what caused the traffic, and they didn't know how long they were going to be in traffic for. There was something funny about how that was such a common frustration among the adults that I knew. Just the fear of it. Like, my mom and dad, just curating their lives around their fear of traffic.

**You mention in the special that one of your childhood heroes was Daisy Duck, an often overlooked Disney character. What do you admire about her?**

I have always been very sympathetic to any character or role that gets very little attention, because then I start wondering, "Well, what's over there? Why can't we see more of that?" So, I think that's what made me really like Daisy Duck. I have a bit in a previous comedy special about her and how, no matter where she was going, she always had this purple eyeshadow on. It just showed how much she cared about everything.

**True, she was always put together.**

Right. There was this one cartoon that I very vividly remember where, so, Donald Duck's whole thing was he was always angry because no one could understand what he was saying. He sounds like a duck. And there's this one cartoon where I think he gets hit in the head and suddenly his speech impediment is gone. He has this beautiful singing voice and becomes an opera star, but he can no longer remember his life before then, so he can't remember Daisy Duck. Then, Daisy Duck goes to a therapist, crying about it, and the therapist is like, "Well, you have two choices. You either let him fly away free and happy but not with you, or you hit him in the head again and he'll be miserable, but back with you." So, she hits him in the head. She's a very complicated character.

**Were there any other cartoons that you think informed your sense of humor as a kid?**

I don't know about informing my sense of humor, but I always liked and thought a lot about *The Jetsons*. Just, aesthetically, I think that show very much informed what I'm drawn to. And, while I did not love the show, *Scooby-Doo*, I liked the conceit of it, which informed *Los Espookys* quite a lot. Ana [Fabrega] and I think about *Los Espookys* as a reverse *Scooby-Doo* where the protagonists come up with the spook as opposed to solving it.

**The camera focuses on your hands for a large portion of the special. Did you do anything to prepare for that?**

No, not really. I wish I had gotten a manicure or something, but I completely spaced out and didn't. But I think hand acting is really funny. Like, right now I'm thinking of a gloved hand going up little stairs. I don't know. Hands are just really funny.

**Would you mind if I listed a few shapes that weren't mentioned in your special, and you can tell me what you think of them?**

I can give you some broad thoughts, yes.

## **Okay, trapezoid.**

I immediately think of what a performative shape it is because it evokes the trapeze. And, how it can never be fully resting. It always looks like it's perked up and ready for something.

## **Pentagon.**

It's a very rigid, sort of angry-looking shape to me. Very concerned about rules. Very concerned about all of its sides being the same size.

## **Rhombus.**

A square that took a chance. A square that just took a swing and is very eager to be seen.

## **Parallelogram.**

Again, very concerned. Very anal about those two lines being parallel to each other.

## **Octagon.**

Just be a circle already. You know, you're almost there. Just keep pushing.

## **What's a piece of good advice you've received as a comic, and a piece of bad advice?**

I feel like I learned a lot from comedian John Early about just believing in what you're doing and having the confidence that people who like it will find it. I was really scared to do a solo show where I was the headliner and people would come only to see me, and he was very pushy for me to do that. So, I learned a lot about how to conduct yourself as an emerging comedian from John because he's always been a few steps ahead in that way. Then, bad advice... Anyone who would give me cookie-cutter advice like, "Always start with this kind of joke," or "Always engage with the crowd when they say something." Anyone fixated with the rules. It's like, everyone's different.

## **What's your ultimate goal right now in comedy or in life?**

Right now, I have a big, blank notebook in front of me and a pen. I'm trying to start working on, potentially, a movie, but I just want to keep making stuff and creating great things. So, I'm eager to figure out what's next. And, of course, a second season of *Los Espookys*, which we start writing next week.



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