

I believe that who I am as a person is the result of the circumstances of my birth and the net sum of everything that has happened to me in my life. In the same way, I believe that who I am as an artist is the result of what I've admired and what has influenced me. I've always found it difficult to talk about my own art without talking about others'.

Josh Lesnick is a comic artist who has worked on his own most of his life, and one of the first to make me realize that it is something I could do for a career. I found him when he was still early in his career, and have been afforded the rare opportunity over nearly the last ten years to watch his skill develop by leaps and bounds. This growth serves as an assurance of the fact that not only an artist capable of success, but is capable of success independently.

Bruce Timm is the person who sparked in me a genuine interest in animation. As ridiculous a claim as it may sound, Fox's Batman: the Animated Series made impressive strides in condensed storytelling and worked hard to go above and beyond it's expectations as a children's show. Timm's bold, graphic, and streamlined style captured power and grace with an economy of line that still allowed for impressive animation. Studying Timm and his methods showed me how the grace of a well-placed line and an understanding of form allowed me to get the most out of my art.

Much later in life I discovered two artists, Brandon Graham and Corey Lewis. A pair of small-press comic artists, I sincerely believe that these two are the most talented people working in comics today. Lewis' art carries action like no one else's. Moving from street graffiti to comic art left him with an unstoppable, unapologetic style that forcibly pulls your eyes along the page. Graham becomes his nemesis, with endless, meticulously detailed cityscapes allow you to calm yourself and spend forever living in a given scene. Between the two of them I found the full emotional range of comics and it's sister mediums.

As for myself, I don't know where my art is yet. Everything I draw, animate, or even play on a musical instrument is directly taken from something that came before me. Were you to look at the drawings in my sketchbook, I can tell you that the curve of a character's chin is derivative of Captain Marvel, or that the design of a spaceship is meant to invoke the nostalgia of Alex Raymond while still maintaining the modern design theories of Rich Sternbach. If you watch any of my cartoons I'll be sure to go over how the timing was driven by people like Dave Kelly or Brad Neely. Any given story I write is bound to be steered by a love of writers from Isaac Asimov to Dave Barry to Chuck Palahniuk.

I am left in a strange spot. Looking back on any given work that I make, I'm either forced to see it as selfish theft from a large swath of people who are far greater than I am, or, when I manage to find a work particularly accomplished, I see something done well and completely removed from me; a strange collaborative work created by people unknowingly controlling my motions like a puppet. However, I can't imagine wanting it any other way. If versatility leaves me disconnected from my own work, I feel I can still be satisfied. If my right hand proves itself to simply be a receiver of other people's talents, I'm more than happy to spend the rest of my life fine-tuning the knobs and finding the channel I want to watch.