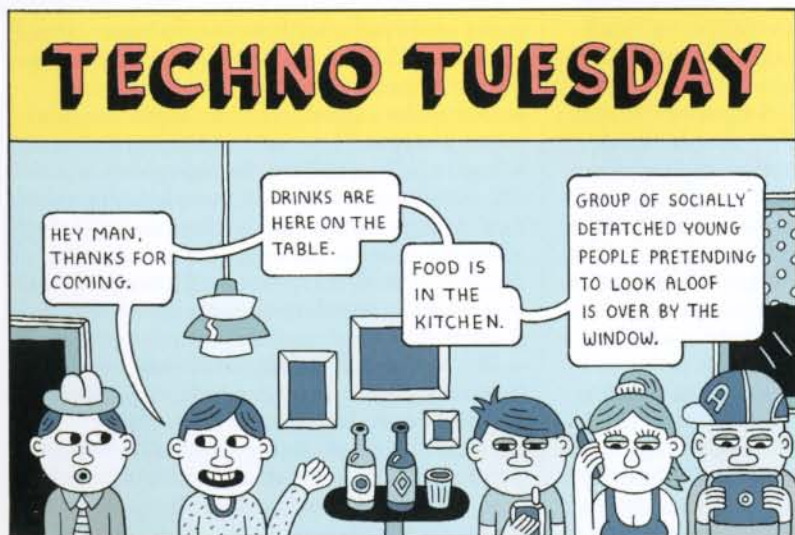


Philadelphia-based illustrator Andy Rementer owes as much to nurturing employers as to his graphic design background, *writes Gavin Lucas*

FREAKS & GEEKS



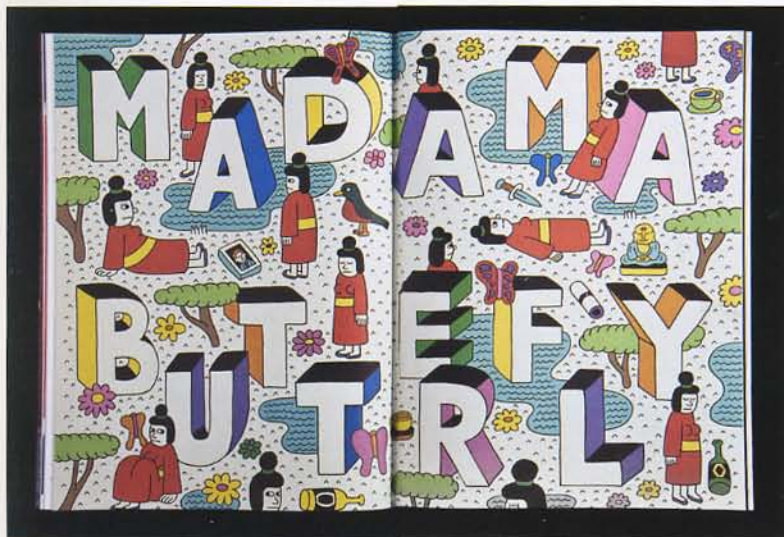
At the recent Pick Me Up graphic art fair at Somerset House in London, all of Philadelphia-based illustrator Andy Rementer's contributions to the group show sold out in just a matter of days. Perhaps that's not surprising considering his illustration work has graced the covers of magazines around the world in countries including Italy, Japan and Russia, and appeared on stickers, in zines and exhibitions over an equally broad geographical spread. Such is the huge appeal of his brightly coloured and keenly observed character illustrations, which typically cast a wry eye upon modern life. However it was only after Rementer graduated in 2004 from Philadelphia's University of the Arts with a degree in graphic design that he started to consider illustration a "valid activity".

"I've always enjoyed drawing and making art," Rementer says, "so once I got all that Swiss typographic education over with, I began drawing again. I feel my design background has played a big role in the development of my personal style. Composition, colour-balance, and lettering are always at the core of my aesthetic."

Shortly after leaving university, Rementer discovered publisher Underground Comix and the work of such illustrators as Robert Crumb, Chris Ware, and Daniel Clowes. "Their work opened my eyes to the possibilities of storytelling and expression through drawing," Rementer explains. Other cited influences include medieval art (specifically "the way characters and objects can be crammed into a composition"), outsider artist Adolf Wolfi and illustrators Seymore Chwast, William Steig and Keiichi Tanaami.

In terms of developing his own style, a two-year stint between 2005 and 2007 at Fabrica's Visual Communication department, headed up by Omar Vulpinari, was crucial. "A lot of the campaign projects that came through were very image-based," recalls Rementer of his time at Fabrica. "I'm not a photographer, so I often used illustration for my directions. I spent a lot of time at Fabrica refining my visual style and getting comfortable drawing."

While at Fabrica, Rementer found a fan in Giorgio Camuffo, of Studio Camuffo in Venice. "He sort of took me under his wing and gave me the opportunity to take my work to the next level," says Rementer. "He encouraged me and gave me a lot of confidence. Through him I did an epic cover for his Sugo magazine, made a print campaign for the city of Venice, illustrated a poster for his studio, all kinds of



Opposite page, top: Andy Rementer's first solo art show, Freakopolis, ran through November 2008 at Open Space in Beacon, New York. Opposite page, bottom: Rementer produced his Techno Tuesday comic strip weekly from 2006-2010.

Left, top: Magazine covers for Casa Brutus (Japan), F5 (Russia) and Sugo (Italy). Left, middle: Various copies of Rementer's self-published zine, Spiller. Left, bottom: Spread from a piece on Madame Butterfly for Max Joseph, the official magazine for the Bavarian Opera House. Below: T-shirt design for Sixpack France. Bottom: Still from a one-minute animation to raise awareness of health issues for men over the age of 50 in France. Made in collaboration with Monsieur L'Agent and Australie Paris



of stuff.” Fabrica also encouraged his illustration and Rementer originally started his long-running weekly comic strip, *Techno Tuesday*, in response to a request from Fabrica. “They needed some content for [the Fabrica] blog, and asked if I wanted to submit a drawing once in a while,” recalls Rementer. “I saw that it was a good opportunity to create something new every week, and also as a way to air my feelings and observations on human behaviour as it is affected by technology. People seemed to immediately respond to it, so I kept doing it. It wasn’t an official Fabrica project, so I continued making it after I left in 2007. It’s a good ritual to make a comic every week. It really keeps your mind and hand going.”

Techno Tuesday ran in *F5*, a weekly magazine in Russia, for over two years (from November 2008 to December 2010), as well as enjoying a six-month spell in the *The Seattle Stranger* and also in the *Portland Mercury*. There are several episodes hosted on a dedicated website and a selection of the comic strips were recently displayed at the Happy Tech exhibition in Bologna, Italy, with the text translated into Italian by Rementer’s wife. He stopped writing the comic earlier this year at roughly the same time he got his first iPhone – “a weird coincidence,” Rementer maintains.

Now, besides creating his own self-initiated work and also producing illustration and animation for clients such as *Apartamento* magazine, *Skitsch*, *ESPN Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and *Orange*, Rementer works part time in the art department at *Urban Outfitters HQ* in Philadelphia.

“The work I do there is mainly typographic and layout driven, so it provides a nice balance to my more free and expressive illustration work. I create graphics for the US stores – stuff like in-store signage, clothing labels, packaging, window displays and lots more. Recently I also helped create the newest logo and custom typeface for the company.”

Again, Rementer is thankful to have found an encouraging employer. “Since day one, the management at *Urban Outfitters* has been very supportive of my outside creative endeavours,” he says. “My current art director teaches and has his own outside design practice, so there’s a mutual understanding there. I’m very fortunate to work with people who encourage and foster what I do.”

Design helps to inform his illustration, but does Rementer’s art ever get to come to the fore in any of his duties at *Urban Outfitters*?

“Occasionally I get the chance to do an illustration for *Urban*,” he admits. “I did a billboard for a new store in Los Angeles, I’ve made some art for the corporate headquarters, and I’m almost always tapped to illustrate office birthday cards. I’ve kind of perfected that at this point.”

See more of Rementer’s work at andyrementer.com. His *Techno Tuesday* archive is at technotuesday.com

Top: Rementer’s catalogue for Milan and London-based design store, *Skitsch* – which was delivered with every copy of *Apartamento* magazine in Spring last year – featured a character called *Mr Bello* and a comic strip in which he goes shopping for beautiful homewares. **Bottom:** Ink and water-colour created in 2009 for a group show at the *Ship Of Fools* gallery in The Hague, The Netherlands

