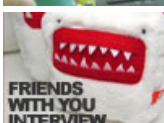
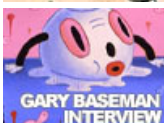




Features



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INTERVIEW

April 7, 2004

{ Interview : Peter Hamlin }



Peter Hamlin has a robot for everything. Many of them are microscopic, fighting diseases and other rogue nanobots within our very bodies. Some are giants, both physically and philosophically, like Ivory Towerbot. His bots are often mixtures of the mechanical and the organic, caricatures of the technological struggle we face in a world that has become largely automated yet is still utterly subject to human error. When the girl who delivers my mail laid one of Peter's prints down in a puddle of water on my doorstep and I was ready to kill her, Peter quietly suggested that with the arrival of the Postalbot, such problems would become a thing of the past.



**Adam:** I know you've been paying the bills with illustration for magazines like The New Yorker and Entertainment Weekly as well as the illustration work you've done for Sony, Lego and The New York Times.

Despite the fact that this is directed work, you manage to give it a flourish and really make it your own. I see this work significantly blurring the line between fine art and illustration- it definitely leaves an impression with the viewer and avoids the "disposable" quality of most commercial illustration. You're also no stranger to the gallery, with shows in

the states and (currently) at London's day14. Where do you find yourself more comfortable, exposed to millions in a national publication or under the microscope for a select few in a major gallery?

**Peter:** I'd like to explore more gallery exposure even though there's a lot more work and discomfort involved. There is so much potential for a fuller, more immersed experience within a specialized space. On the other hand, the published work has a life of it's own and can be seen by those who wouldn't have access otherwise.

**Do you feel that your commercial work transcends the expectations associated with commissioned illustration work?**

I try to make the best work possible within the given time constraints and context. Illustration is great for working out visual communication. It's liberating to think of the medium as fast, disposable and yet having a valuable function.

**Conversely, your gallery work and your Hambot website often seem to be rather critical of "product" and "advertisement". How do you reconcile the conceptual product of an idea like Hambot with the actual product that Peter Hamlin has become?**

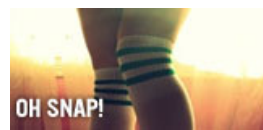
Product and advertising isn't necessarily bad, it's how it's used and what it's used for.

Advertisements and products are part of my experience and environment. It's embedded into my psyche. I use these familiar methods to relate and reflect my impressions.

C12 Fancub

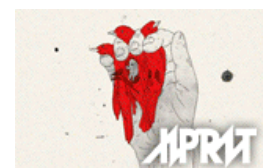
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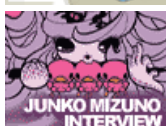
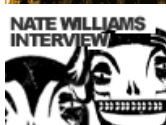
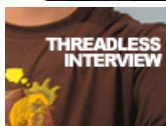
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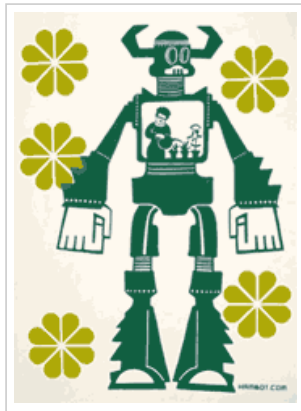
Latest Dozen

"Dizzy" Lizzy Rachtman's Top 12 Metal Releases of 2010.

- Selector!
- 2009 Miami Art Fair Snapshots
- Three Hearts Club
- Daisy De Villeneuve for TFL
- Low Fidelity by Space Invaders
- Cougar
- Banksy VS. Bristol Museum
- Giro Flak cycling helmet and cousins



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**Hambot arise?**

It spontaneously came to me after finishing a drawing and stuck.

**As a bit of a science dork, I've been reading about the nanotechnology revolution for years. I'm always fascinated by the far-reaching claims of even the most rational eggheads, and sci-fi authors like William Gibson and Neal Stephenson have been exploring the practical and not-so-practical side of nanotechnology as well, really fleshing out our conception of where this could lead. However, nobody has ever quite managed to do what you have done with nanomachines- turn them into art. What was behind your decision to form the Nanosquad, and what have been your main influences in bringing them to life?**

Science and fantasy become indistinguishable when thinking about the future... it's a completely open-ended frontier to explore. I had read Ray Kurzweil's colorful book 'Age of Spiritual Machines' and it haunted me. I began intensely dreaming about little people like I had seen before in dreams and psychedelic experiences. What would tiny little intelligent machines do and why? Then came the idea for Nanosquad. Nanosquad is a team of nanonauts designed to maintain peace between different kinds of nanobots which are competing to serve humanity. I wanted to put a different spin on the machines either being indifferent or against humanity. In certain ways to parallel humanity by having the nanobots with diverse motivations including warring among each other in order to better serve their creators and at the same time, a force to help preserve themselves (and, as a byproduct, humanity).

**As Nanoworld continues to evolve, what can we expect for our tiny friends?**

Yes, our little buddies will be making more appearances as drawings, paintings, and animation... It could be fun to explore fashion, interior design and try out new worlds for these wee comrades.



watched it as a kid and have some fond memories with the movie. Although not a movie, the now discontinued Disneyland theme ride called 'Adventure thru Inner Space' was another good memory. It's was this great, corny vintage ride from the 60's where you get miniaturized.

**How pissed are you going to be when someone actually invents a Couchbot and doesn't give you credit?**

Heh heh...well, art can actually compel science and industry and vice versa. It would be great to merge these disciplines through collaboration. If it were up to me, everyone involved would get their due credit!

**Have you thought about trying to get your inventions patented?**

Sounds like a fun idea...

**I think it would be an interesting exercise, maybe write a few grant proposals to receive funding- since the current administration is so opposed to funding of the arts, you could call it an industrial endeavor, they'd eat it up. (You know some sicko in a lab coat is pumping out multi-**

**The website is damn funny, and all the Hambot material seems to crackle with the energy created by the conflict of mechanical vs. organic. I really love the fact that you've been working in silk-screen because it seems to embody the struggle of a mechanical process against inevitable organic error. Are you savoring the struggle, or are you ready to go strictly digital?** Silkscreen printing helps burn some off some of those carbs... Both digital and traditional ways of working have their places and uses. Digital animation projects, silkscreen posters and booklets are in the works...

**Speaking of the mechanical/organic clash, how did**

Chester 5000 XYV by Jess Fink Deradorian • "Mind Raft EP"  
Lost Constellations - The Art of Tara McPherson Vol. II

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**Last 12 Twelves**

- CRATE: February '10
- "Dizzy" Lizzy Rachtman's **Top 12 Metal Releases** of 2009.
- CRATE: August '09
- CRATE: June '09
- CRATE: May '09
- "Dizzy" Lizzy Rachtman's **Top 12 Metal Releases** of 2008.
- Top Twelve Hooker Flicks
- Twelve Sexually Dubious Video Game Titles
- I LOVE The Asylum
- 12 Stupid Blunt Wrap Flavors
- 12 Types of Nipples
- Wrap It Up: Music in 2K7

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**Latest Singles**

- Shobaleader One
- El Guincho "Bombay" (NSFW)
- Cut Copy "Where I'm Going"
- Parra x Madlib
- George Condo for Supreme
- Oh Snap! Tees
- Ratatat "Neckbrace" from 'LP4'
- The XX 'Islands' Video
- JanSport Heritage & Urban Framework Packs
- Health - 'We Are Water' video
- JackThreads
- CREEP STREET S/S'10

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**Miscellany**

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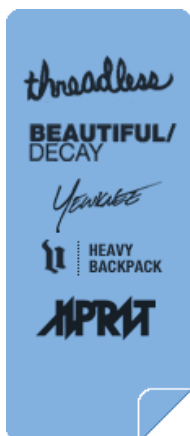
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**legged turkeys as we speak.)**

Unfortunately, our current administration is also opposed to expanding stem-cell research. On the other hand, who knows how many aspiring Dr. Moreau's are out there now? Questions like how can we, as an international community, regulate technology as well as foster healthy revolutionary exploration?

I don't know and as a non-scientist dude, I feel moved to have some foolery with those questions.

**What robot has made the biggest impression on you?**

Does replicant count? Whenever I'm in Chinatown NYC and it's raining at night, I can't help to think of Blade Runner.

**Tell me about the other robots in your life.**

Let's see, in grade school there were the Shogun warriors toys, Star Wars droids, Star Blazers anime, TV Buck Rogers "Twinky", the Transformers cartoon and the animated movie, Heavy Metal's robots and later the Terminator movie among others...

What really struck me hard was Mark Pauline's Survival Research Laboratories. This merging of industrial grease-monkey, do-it-yourself attitude and aesthetic was a huge example of people actually making real, working memorable things as art.

**Correct me if I'm wrong, but you're a cartoon lover from the wayback, right?**

Sure, I like the contrast of nostalgic imagery with ideas

of the future.

**I see some really classic influences in your work. What are your favorite classic cartoons, and what (if anything) are you digging on these days?**

Well, to name a few, Felix the Cat, earlier Bugs Bunny, Fantasia... then there's later classics like School House Rocks...

Let's see, there's a recently released DVD with collected works called 'Avoid Eye Contact' by Square Footage Films. Aleksey Budovsky's "Bathtime in Clerkenwell" is really brilliant. Something you could watch again and again.

Those visiting NYC, check out: <http://www.ammi.org>

**Do you have a childhood fave?**

Probably Star Blazers for the overall incredible design, concepts, and stylized motion...

**The flash animation on your website is a lot of****fun. (Am I a complete loser for playing with the Robo-Generator for an hour?) Have you thought about doing an extended animated piece, or working on an actual 'toon?**

Yes, I've got a couple of pieces in the wings. When they're ready I'll put parts of some of them online.

**I know that you have also done some comic-book style printing, and given some backstory on a few of your characters and ideas. Is this something you'll be doing more of?**

Definitely, in different forms including silkscreen printing... there are just so many possibilities.

**Do you read comics? If so, what do you love?**

Yep, work such as Sergio Aragones, Roz Chast, Al Jaffee, Chris Ware, Matt Groening, Highwater folks for starters...

**Bill at day14 gallery and I think a lot alike. We both want to know when we can buy some Hambot toys! Is this something you're considering, something you're working on or something you despise?**

Sure, why not and why stop at toys? The possibilities are endless... it would be great to make a barrel of Nanonauts where they could form long linking chains, or pencil sharpeners or Nanonaut shaped vitamins, etc. ....

**Do you have a favorite toy, either from back in the day or from right now?**

Yes, my now long-gone Alien figure. Very detailed with clear plastic sheaths and triggered-action metallic teeth... where is 'it'

now?

**How did you get hooked up with day14, and how does it feel to be showing in London? How is your work being received?**

Bill from Day14 found my work online through newstoday.com and the Giant Robot store. It's really great to have work represented outside of the U.S. People have been exceptionally supportive and encouraging.

**Do you get out to galleries much?**

I've kind of been in the woodwork due to things being very busy lately, so I haven't been to see many shows recently... Thankfully, the New Yorker will assign work that gets me out of the studio which involves illustrating art shows in galleries for their 'Goings On About Town' section periodically. I'll be selective and find some shows to get some inspiration soon...

**What have you been most impressed with lately, and is there anyone we've never heard of that you'd like to give a shout out?**

Maybe you know these very talented artist's works:

Chris Capuozzo, he comes from a graffiti-writing background, and is a multi-talented individual. Keep an eye out for a collaborative silkscreen zine we're doing together...



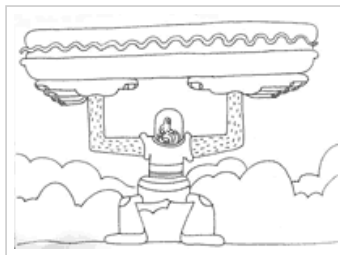
Yuko Shimizu ([yukoart.com](http://yukoart.com)) . She's a prolific illustrator and painter. Her figures are exquisite and she has a lovely palette...

Sarah Varon ([chickenopolis.com](http://chickenopolis.com)) She makes beautiful, heartfelt comics and is silk-screen printing queen.

**Everybody we've interviewed lately has managed to slip in a little political commentary on the upcoming Presidential election, whether solicited or not. I wanted to give you a chance to sound off.**

Look at the facts and make the best voting decision possible.

**I've really been enjoying the Ivory Towerbot and Tree-Falls-In-Forestbot silkscreen prints. As my friend Eric would say "you're on some Brainy Smurf-type shit there. The slogan you've marked these prints with, "Technology for every occasion, whether thought of or not" seems like a warning. Is profound thought something we'll give up (or just forget to do) as the rest of**



**our world becomes automated and worry-free? Is even philosophy safe as we rabidly mechanize all things?**

These are questions for all of us...

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By Adam in Interviews

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