

Café Artiste

Artist Spotlight: **Boey**, Newport Beach

By Anastacia Grenda

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Background

The 3-D video game animator—whose full name is Cheeming Boey—brings new life to the basic foam cup with intricate illustrations. It's a medium that environmentalists tell us will last for about 500 years.



Creation

Boey's tools may be simple—a 4-cent cup and a black Sharpie pen—but his technique isn't. He can't make preliminary sketches on the cup—pencils can puncture the foam or smudge when erased—so every drawing is freehand, based on visualized ideas. He holds the cup gingerly; handling it too much can lead to static, which attracts lint. And with permanent ink there's no do-over: One false move and his canvas is trashed.

Inspiration

Boey listens to music as he draws, and the emotions or memories the songs evoke guide his work; his playlist runs the gamut from Chinese music to Feist to “really bad



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'90s music like Roxette.“ I urge people to look beyond the canvas, look beyond the tools; look at ideas and try different stuff. Don't stick with the traditional pen on paper.”

See It

Marion Meyer Contemporary Art, 354 N. Coast Highway, Laguna Beach, 949-497-5442, www.marionmeyergallery.com.

For more on Boey and his work, visit www.orangecoastmagazine.com/boey.

You can also see his Web site: www.iamboey.com.

Art in the Round

The unique challenges of creating on foam cups

By Anastacia Grenda

Black Sharpie pen. Foam cup. Sounds straightforward, but Boey's art isn't as simple as it seems. He has made about 150 to 160 cups during the past two years, so he has learned what works—and what doesn't—when it comes to his creative process.

Mainly, he's got one shot to get each cup right, but that's part of the fun.

“It's always exciting,” Boey says of drawing freehand with permanent ink. “With the first line, I can tell almost immediately if a cup will be successful or not.”

But that also raises the stakes; Boey says he sometimes gets nervous that he may ruin a drawing that is going well. “Some of the pieces I take a couple of months on. They get so good that I'm afraid of messing them up.”

There are a lot of variables that can wreak havoc. Boey only uses fine-point black pens, but he has discovered that not all Sharpies are created equal. Some tips are finer, while others are rounded. And there are color variations as well, especially as a pen runs out of ink. To get around that, Boey usually leaves several pens uncapped overnight—in the morning, the tips are slightly hard and the ink comes out a dark black shade.

There are other tricks he uses as well. Instead of the more traditional route of blocking out big shapes in a drawing and then adding detail, he does the reverse. To prevent static build-up on the cup's surface—which would then attract lint that could ruin a line—he tries to handle the cup as little as possible, often holding it between his thumb and middle finger. To get as straight a line as possible, he turns the cup while holding the pen in one place, and uses a mirror so he knows where the line should end.

It may be complicated, but it's never dull. “Drawing on paper is so boring now,” Boey says. “With a cup, everything has to look good from all sides; a canvas ends at the four corners. That's not as exciting anymore.”