

in conversation

This is an email interview held between Ryan Wallis and Mandy Conidaris in July 2013.

MC - How did you become a digital artist?

RW - When people would explain things to me, like songs, landscapes, colours, anything, I realised how differently I saw the world compared to everyone else, my visual interpretation of things was always a little skewed, almost as if my senses were wired differently and I got to experience the world differently. I decided to start using this unique view on things to visually interpret my vision of the world.

MC - Have you lived in Joburg all your life?

RW - Correct, the East Rand of Jozi has raised me.

MC - Do you see the Joburg skyline every day?

RW - Yes I do, every day on the way to and from work, but strangely, everyday it looks different.

MC - What importance does it have for you? What do you feel when you see the skyline?

RW - It is my breath of fresh air. It is where my heart lives.

MC - Why did that particular image or body of artwork come into existence?

RW - It has been largely influenced by people's descriptions and opinions of it. I don't necessarily agree, but I feel like it has been drummed into my head, like this is how I should think about it and see it.

MC - Do you remember a specific trigger?

RW - Thousands of voices and dreams.

MC - Did you have any creative influences, e.g. other artists or websites?

RW - The street artist Banksy, and definitely a science fiction-style landscape as I saw recently in *After Earth*.

MC - What role did technical process play in your image creation? How did things develop from an initial idea – did the act of working on the image prompt you to change your choices as you went along? or was the image firmly in your head when you started?

RW - The only constant was the city skyline, before I even put "pen to paper" the image changed a 1000 times. From beginning to end the artwork evolved multiple times. Certain elements even happened by accident.

MC - How did your thinking process about this project lead to your choices of images?

RW - The theme was *Urban*, for me urban is the Joburg cityscape.

MC - Can you mention a few important parts of the image and what they mean?

RW - The little boy being pulled by pigeons represents how I think sometimes that nature will be our only escape, and the trees how life is struggling to exist in this man-made environment. The exploding mounds of earth relate to my belief that nature is going to take back the earth, and destroy everything so that it can rejuvenate itself.

MC - Do you remember why that developed – do you have a theme, e.g. concern for the future etc?

RW - I don't think this will happen in my life time, but I think we're contributing to it.

MC - What was your intention when making the artwork?

RW - Maybe to escape reality

MC - How do you assess your image afterwards from the point of view of its meanings to you, such as the memories it evokes of your thought processes during the making?

RW - Sometimes things from a distance seem dark and menacing, but when we pay attention, there is that glimpse of light and hope. The Joburg cityscape represents the multiple personalities of the city and the people that live in and around it. It comes from glorious heydays, it sank into a violent and dark time and it is rising out of this darkness to become a great place again. People's negative perceptions have influenced the image, but I love this city it is my home

MC - Is the work's significance to the viewer important to you?

RW - I hope everyone takes their own unique message away from it.

Thanks Ryan!