

(from) Fecal Face Interview/So Hot Right Now by Noah Hanson (7/05)

:: Tape Baby Guy/The Storker/Mark Jenkins ::

One of my favorite interviews ever.
So glad Mark Jenkins of xmarkjenkinsx.com was into this as much as I am. If your not familiar with his stuff already, he's the guy who makes all the amazing tape sculptures your about to witness.

Really happy with the results. So yeah, here it is.

SHRN: Can you tell me a little about yourself? Age, whereabouts, stats, etc?

MJ: 34, not married, no kids, living in DC.

SHRN: I keep referring to you around these parts as "the tape baby guy." Whats "the storker" nickname all about?

MJ: Storker is from the Storker Project which references a giant stork propagating the tape species by dropping babies across the land for humans to take in and nurture to maturity.

SHRN: I'm wondering how this whole tape thing got started... Did you have a boring desk job and one day decide to make use of the office supplies, or have you always just had a love for tape?

MJ: I used to make casts of pencils when I was a little kid but never really pushed it. I think it was something about not wasting tape that a teacher told me. I started messing around with it again (25 years later) one afternoon while I was living in Rio (there teaching English).

SHRN: Yeah... Using excessive tape kinda feels taboo for some reason...

Can you tell me some more about your experience in Rio as an english teacher?

MJ: I was living in Copacabana teaching a few classes a week to young business professionals. I had some cool Brazilian friends and we hung out and did/saw art and went to clubs and drank a lot of Skol beer. I really got attached to the city/people but ultimately ran out of money (from not working enough and spending too much on art supplies).

SHRN: How do you go about making tape babies/people/traffic cones/spiders/whatever, and how long does it take? (I dare you to give me DIY instructions)

MJ: The spider probes are made from beach umbrellas that are stripped and bent. Takes about 15 min. The freeform tape sculpture (like the big sperm creature) is done by spinning the tape in circles in a spiraling way and gives you shoulder tendonitis. Cast-based stuff is pretty straight forward: wrap something in cling wrap, wrap it in tape, cut it off and tape it back up. I put up a DIY tutorial at http://tapesculpture.org/.

SHRN: How long have you been doing the tape deal, and how far do you plan on taking it?

MJ: I've been doing this since 2003 and since it pushes me more than I push it, I can't really say.

SHRN: Outside of sculpting tape, what do you do? (hobbies/entertainment)

MJ: I'm into nature and travel. I spent a year hiking around in the Andes in 2002. I used to do a lot of music/bands but my ears are kind of shot from that and so I kind of graced out.

SHRN: From talking with you before, I remember you mentioning that you like electronic music, drum n bass, aphex twin, etc... Where else do you explore musically?

MJ: I think the last show I saw was Death From Above 1979. But I haven't been doing so much exploring lately. I think I'm taking a little break. Right now I'm less into arranged music with melodies and more into the "around you" sounds like a bunch of birds in a tree or noisy restaurants.

SHRN: List everything on your desk right now?

MJ: Laptop, external hard drive, two white bottle caps, two roles of tape, two staples, and a bic pen.

SHRN: Oldest memory?

MJ: In the back seat of a car going to pre-school the first time. I was looking at my new shoes.

SHRN: Last dream you remember?

MJ: One of the giraffe women (the tall tape dress ladies) was lecturing me about needing to change my ways and I was nodding my head mostly just because she seemed pretty volatile and I didn't want her to go nuts.

SHRN: Influences?

MJ: Juan Munoz, Lee Bonteceu, Artur Barrio, Darius Jones.

SHRN: So, it sounds like your pretty solidly into sculpture then. Do you ever damper in any other mediums?

MJ: Yeah for me its 3-D mostly but I did some pieces that mirror-imaged zoom shots of pubic hair to make tapestries. I'd like to do some with hairs from other people or other animals. And I think doing an installation with hair wallpaper and tape people would be cool.

SHRN: Those pube shots are AMAZING! Whats your take on mathew barneys sculpture? (I may not use this question, but am curious anyway)

MJ: I don't really know too much about his works outside of the floppy-eared guy in the suit that I think is pretty cool (I'm into the whole man-animal perspective). I'd like to know his works more--see them up close.

SHRN: Whats it like having your stuff featured in a show and what kind of upcoming events can we expect from you?

MJ: My stuff doesn't' translate so well in a show. Kind of like a moth flying around a light vs. one pinned behind a glass. But lately I've been trying different routes like showing it in a documentary way with installation photos or doing stuff on the front of the building for the shows to kind of marry the "in" with the "out."
Upcoming...I'm developing some mannequin prototypes for a small clothing store and doing some club installations for parties. For the Storker Project, I'd like to see it go to more cities and I might make a trip to Berlin in the Fall.

SHRN: Advice?

MJ: The best frontiers to explore are inside your head.

SHRN: True dat, true dat.

Many thanks to Mark for sharing with us.
Again, check out Mark's site over at xmarkjenkinsx.com, and check out http://tapesculpture.org/ for a tutorial on how to make your own tape sculptures. I've already made 2 so far. A hammer and a small wine bottle, and I plan on working my way up to semitruck. I'll keep ya posted.

Posted by noah at July 10, 2005 09:44 PM