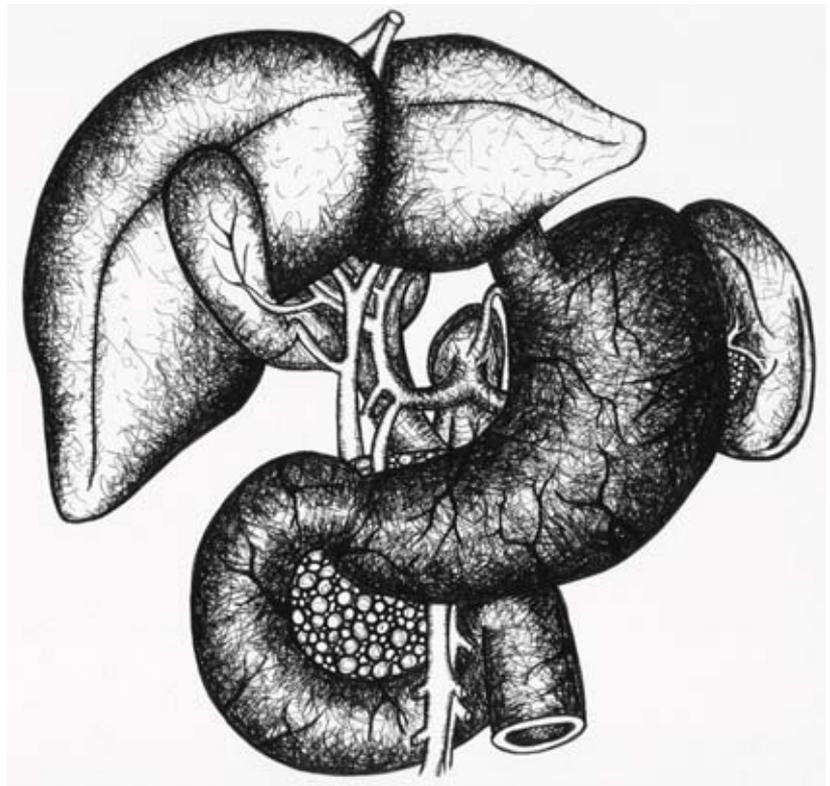


Brittany Veitch

Brittany Veitch is a young artist and toy designer with an eye for the macabre. Recently graduating with first class honours in Industrial Design from RMIT University in Melbourne, as well as having a Diploma of Furnishing, she is a great example of the transdisciplinary practice of many designers today. Creating her work with different media and practice such as drawing, CAD, sewing, animation, video, to performance art and puppetry; she explores themes that are always a little left of centre.

Kate McCurdy



Stomach, Liver and
Gallbladder
Ink pens. 2007

A fairytale childhood

Much of her childhood years were spent in her mother's toyshop 'Hobbit House', as well as playing with the family's menagerie of pets at their home, including a deer, alpaca, turtles and quails. Brittany's creations are often inspired by animals and their involvement in fairytales, as shown in her 'Maimed Fairytale' and 'From the Woods' collections. Although she has always marvelled at her sister's vintage Steiff collection of toys - 'I am particularly taken with a velvet zebra' - it wasn't until 2005 while studying Industrial Design

that she began to make her own toys. Encouraged by working in an experimental studio in an open, supportive environment, at university she felt unrestricted by traditional industrial design constraints and developed what became the 'Maimed Fairytale' collection, 'in which the wounds inflicted on the toys are inspired by passages from the early editions of childhood fairytales.'

Toys from the dark side

Brittany sees her toys as art pieces, and hopes to have them exhibited and collected, rather than mass-produced

for commercial gain. However, she delights in current trends in popular toy design and cartoons which delve into darker places in the name of fun.

'I like that there is an alternative to the saccharine cute, for instance, Nathan Jurevicius's 'Scary Girl', Amy Winfrey's web cartoon 'Making Fiends' and the likes of Johnny the Homicidal Maniac by Jhonen Vasquez. Within my work there is recognition and admiration for other artists and practitioners, and a combination of these influences plays a role in how my work evolves.'

Creative inspiration

Brittany other creative influences range from Hieronymus Bosch's vivid and complex imagery; to the way that Hiraki Sawa's video art uses scale within environment to mix fantasy with the banal; the eerie sculpture and rogue taxidermy of Elizabeth McGrath; to video visionary Chris Cunningham's clashes of the horrific and the comical; as well as animator David Firth's wry-humoured flash animations of strange and disturbing stories. Brittany recalls viewing Firth's work was what prompted her to create her own animations.



(above, series left to right)

From the Woods:
Cleaved Head (vinyl, felt and plush), **Rib Flap** (felt and woolen fabric), **Stomach Flap** (vinyl and felt), **Brain Flap** (velveteen and vinyl), **Cleaved Butt** (felt and vinyl).

(top, series)
Maimed Fairytale. A collection of hand-sewn soft toys that suffer gruesome injuries inspired by grim fairytales.

Designing across media: with a needle and thread in hand

Brittany generates and refines her concepts using both the computer and pen and paper, most often by sketching out ideas on paper and then refining the patterns using software such as Adobe Illustrator. However some of her sewing work is done more on the fly, where aesthetic and structural decisions of a project can be made as it progresses. Brittany chooses to hand sew most of her creations, such as the 'From the Woods' collection, as it is an integral part of the process and aesthetic of the pieces, but other toys use a combination of machine stitching and hand sewn detailing.

The 'From the Woods' collection has recently caught the eye of the frontman of Finnish band HIM, Ville Valo, who made a special request to meet Brittany during the band's recent tour of Australia and went home with a family of seven deer from the collection.

Brittany also enjoys the freedom of working in animation.

'Animation as an artistic medium is a blast to work with because it requires patience and dedication...at the moment I am working on a hand drawn paper animation that explores the relationship between a mute girl and a lump of coal and [explores] themes of reticence, melancholy and how

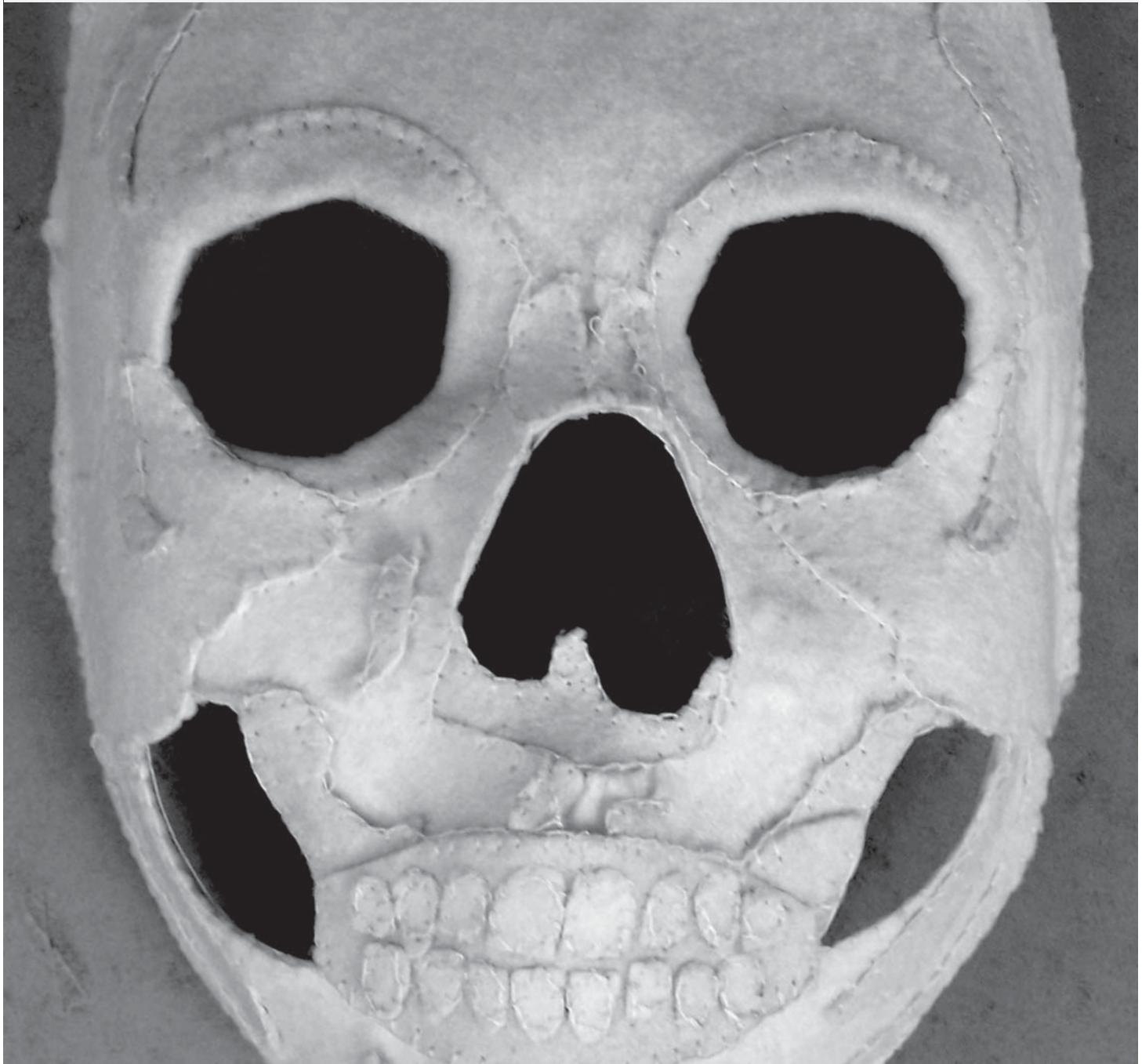
companionship is formed.' Brittany has also provided illustrations for magazines, and participated in a puppetry show in the 2007 Melbourne Fringe Festival. She also has a number of planned projects in the works, including a series of short videos of landscapes modelled in 3D CAD software, as well as a photography series exploring the cliché images of 1950s happy families using cast taxidermy forms disfigured with the plague.

Brittany describes transdisciplinary practice as a 'cross-pollination of skills and ideas. From this emerges a different way of thinking about design. I am comfortable

being a transdisciplinary practitioner and will work on multiple projects focused on different skills and media as an effective motivational tool to produce a steady flow of work outcomes. Being able to switch from video to CAD to sewing is very liberating and enables a thorough investigation and exploration of ideas.'

Brittany's advice for students planning on entering the design community, particularly that of industrial design, is to 'get involved...by entering competitions or by participating in collectives. Be active and open and never be afraid to experiment.'

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Mr. Walker's Death Mask, 2008
Hand sewn skull, felt.