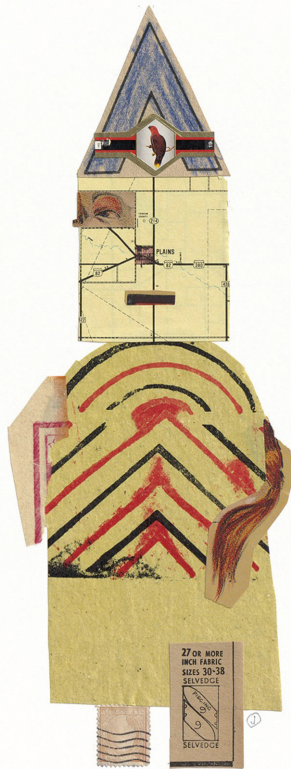


THE SECRET LIFE OF PAPER

FEATURE: MARION EELE. PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF SCOTT PETTY, REBECCA HOSSACK ART GALLERY AND THE ARTIST

Acclaimed interior designer Jerry Jeanmard's forays into collage illustrate his unique talent and lifelong penchant for paper.



Suspicious Clown, 2016

Jerry Jeanmard has always loved paper. Throughout his successful career, first as an illustrator and graphic designer and latterly as a successful interior designer with Wells Design/Jerry Jeanmard, he has been collecting, magpie style, anything that caught his eye – from bus tickets to wrapping paper. “Pre-used paper has a previous life, which gives it character,” he explains.

The first time Jeanmard recalls making something from his collection is way back in the 1970s, when he would arrange address labels on chipboard in a manner reminiscent of an urban grid, which he would then work over the top of with rubber stamps. It wasn't until about a decade ago, however, that the Louisiana-born, Houston-based designer began to work more seriously on creating collages. It was laundry tags – “The colours! The numbers!” – that pushed him into turning his expansive collection into works of art.

These works began as abstract compositions that were driven by colour and texture, but figures quickly began to take shape. “It's all trial and error,” Jeanmard describes. “I put a piece down, and if it looks right in context I glue it down. If not, I move it or try a different piece.” What emerges is a curious collection of characters that seem to display distinct personalities, despite their economy of form. Set against crisp white backgrounds, all of the same size, the works have a decidedly contemporary feel, even with their vintage components. Their enigmatic titles – *Musicmaker*, *Tuff Grrrl*, *Eavesdropper* – wittily reflect incorporated elements such as an oversized pair of ears or a sliver of paper upturned to form a snarl. The names hint at complex personalities behind these simplistic figures, though Jeanmard maintains that he only imagines names, not narratives.



Tuff Grrrl, 2016



“PRE-USED PAPER HAS A PREVIOUS LIFE, WHICH GIVES IT CHARACTER”

Jeanmard’s other specialities can be seen to cross over into these works. He likens the process of watching the collages take shape to that of decorating and furnishing rooms; at the most basic level both processes involve arranging different elements in a way that is spontaneous and uncontrived. He describes it as a “liberating experience,” especially for someone “to whom control means a great deal.”

Jerry Jeanmard’s latest exhibition, Paper People will run at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery in London from May 4 to 28.