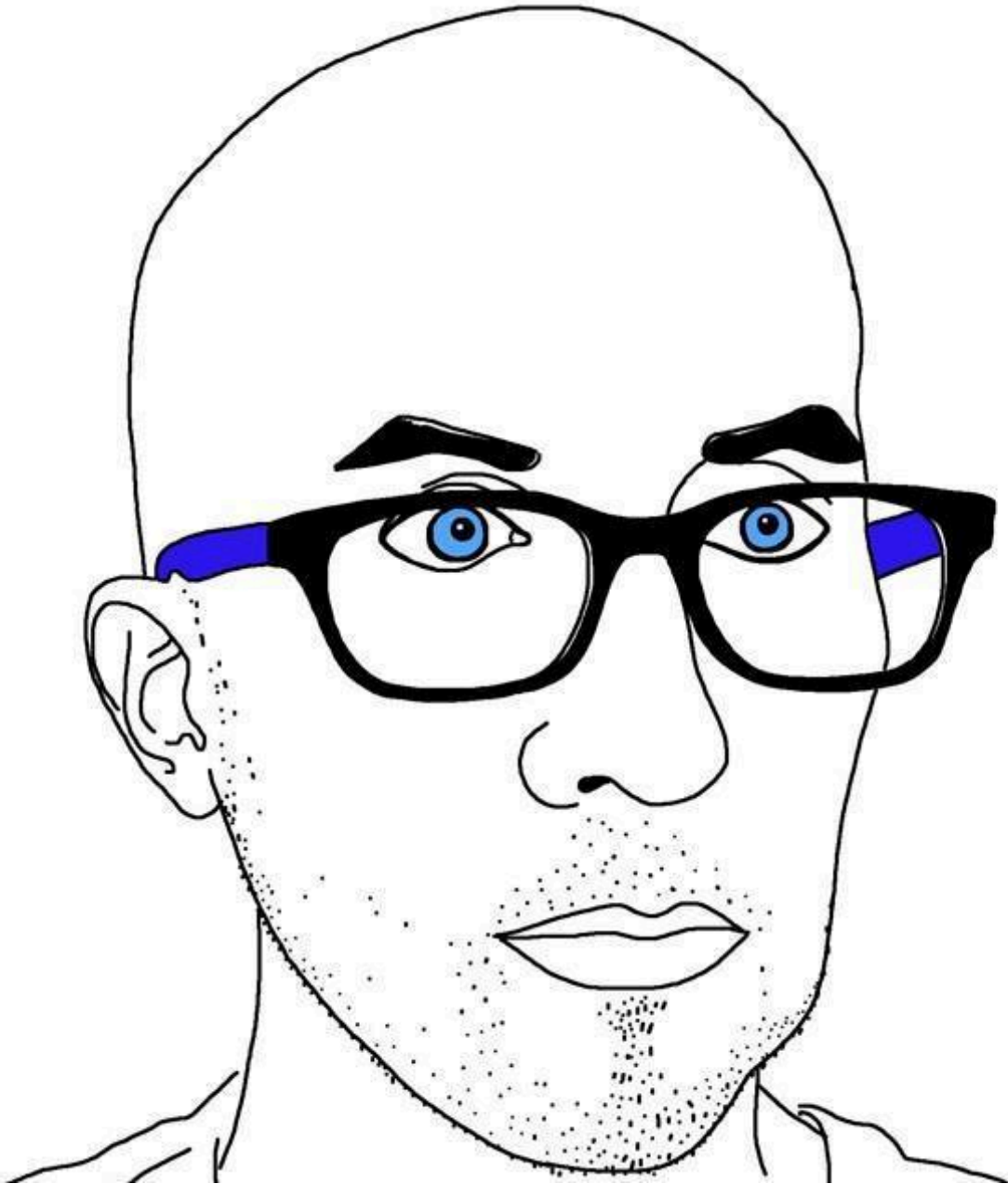


Chatting with Randy Toy

[beckscityrva](#)
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Ahhhh, springtime. It's time to take off our winter coats and whip out our allergy medicine. The birds are chirping cheerfully, the bees are buzzing busily, and the flowers are blooming beautifully.

It's hard to miss the new pansies and daffodils that have sprung up lately, decorating our fair city with a much needed dose of nature.

Some lovely florals have also sprung up in **Quirk Gallery**. Richmond based artist **Randy Toy** introduced his newest exhibition, "**CMYK: Arrangements**" on this past First Friday. His "reverse paintings" are fun, poppy takes on the classic floral painting.



I recently got a chance to sit down and chat with Toy about his process in making these works. His inspirations ranged from nature to **Matisse**, and pop artists like **Tom Wesselman**.

My first question was of course, what does *CMYK* stand for? Cyan, magenta, yellow and black. The four colors in printing and they're also the four primary colors Toy uses to make all the colors in his paintings. It is a nod to Toy's experience in printmaking. In fact, he approached these paintings very much in the same way he approached his prints.

Toy used the technique of *backwards painting*.

"It's a really backwards way to make something—literally." Toy said with a laugh. He showed me a sample piece of the PVC, a transparent plastic sheet, that he paints on. It has a palette sample, various shades of purple, on it. This is how the painting comes together: he does all the painting on the back and then when it's done he turns it around and you have it on the front. All the brushstrokes are on the back, so on the front you get that sort of cool, almost MS paint effect.



"Originally the images start on an iPad; I draw them there. And then I enlarge them in Photoshop and then I flip them around to make a mirror image because I want to reproduce the image on the iPad." Toy explained.

So he flips it around, and then he starts the painting on PVC.

"And this is a very unforgiving medium. Once you start laying it down, you can't pull anything back, you can't correct any mistakes. You get one shot, basically." Toy continues. "So you have to really think about how you're laying color down, and

what goes on top of what because some colors are more transparent and more opaque.”

In that regard, it’s akin to printmaking. The process is sort of similar to making a lithograph where you have a finished image, and you’re dissecting and pulling it apart, trying to figure out how to reassemble it to make your image in the end. That’s pretty much how these paintings are done too. You gotta have your finished image, you pull it apart, and figure out how to put it back together.



“A lot of times when I’m in the studio, there’s lots of different avenues the work can go down.” Toy said. “Generally, it will either be conceptually based or process based. I don’t really feel like I’m married to one particular style or particular medium, so when I start a project, it’s sort of like taking a trip. I know I’m gonna go somewhere—and that’s exciting—but I don’t know exactly where I’m gonna end up, you know? I’m always open to doing something new.”



Great things happen when artists think outside the box and challenge themselves. I highly suggest you step into **Quirk Gallery**, grab an iced chai latte at the cafe, and peruse the art. Sounds like a perfect spring day to me.

CMYK: Arrangements is running until April 3.

Randy Toy's website:

<http://randytoy.com/> (<http://tumblr.com/redirect?z=http%3A%2F%2Frandytoy.com%2F&t=NjAzOWU3NGY5ZWE4ZjkxN2IwNjY0MTMzNzNmY4N2Q5YmI1MCxmSERrR0ZUYw%3D%3D>)

Quirk Gallery's website:

[http://quirkgallery.com/gallery/_\(http://tumblr.com/redirect?z=http%3A%2F%2Fquirkgallery.com%2Fgallery%2F&t=NmE2Y2UzMDAyZTYzZjhiYTVmZTNhMzNlZmMyOTMzNTg5ZmE1YzQyMixmSERrR0ZUYw%3D%3D\)](http://quirkgallery.com/gallery/_(http://tumblr.com/redirect?z=http%3A%2F%2Fquirkgallery.com%2Fgallery%2F&t=NmE2Y2UzMDAyZTYzZjhiYTVmZTNhMzNlZmMyOTMzNTg5ZmE1YzQyMixmSERrR0ZUYw%3D%3D))

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