



Designer. Graphic artist. Image-maker. Whatever you call him, **Richard Borge's unique style and creative vision has made him one of the most sought after talents in the business. For Epson, he seemed like the perfect choice to help introduce our new Epson Stylus Pro 3800 printer. After creating the ad, we sat down with Richard to get his thoughts on his career, the industry, and our new printer.**

Q. Although it was your work featured in the ad, were you always supposed to be in it?

A. No. It was supposed to be a model. I was just hanging out at casting when the art director for Epson's advertising agency, pulled me aside and asked if I would be interested in being in the ad. They thought it would take the concept to the next level. I remember I had ridden my bike down and my hair was all messy from the helmet and I guess they liked that.

Q. So what attracted you to this project?

A. Well, I've been an Epson guy from the beginning. I use Epson products a lot and that's what I always tell people to use when they ask me. So it was really exciting to be involved with a product I already believed in. Then there's the ad itself. I think it's great. I have always had a lot of respect for the creative process and this ad illustrates that process.

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Q. What unique characteristics of your style did you bring to this project?

A. My sense of space, texture and color. And my ability to organize chaos. I'm a visual problem solver. That's what I do day in and day out. Some ideas are hard to communicate with a photo. For example, one magazine wanted to do an article about the suffering Italian bond market. Well, how do you photograph that? You can't, really, but you can solve it visually through illustration.

Q. How closely does what's depicted in the ad resemble your true thought process?

A. Pretty close actually. I still do sketching with pencil on paper and that's how I start everything. Some of those little scribble layouts of the robot and the type and stuff, that's all real, that's what I was doing to figure out what the image coming out of the printer would be.

Q. The objects around your head seem to exist on several planes. Why is that?

A. A lot of that was in the art director's head from Epson's advertising agency - and I think it's just great art direction. The sharper, foreground stuff represents the ideas that survived and came to the surface. The stuff in back represents things that faded away at some point during the process.



Q. Do you use any other Epson products?

A. Yeah, I have an Epson Stylus® Photo R1800 and an Epson Perfection® V700 scanner that I use all the time.

Q. What do you use your Epson printers for mostly?

A. Lots of things. I sell a lot of fine art and I use Epson printers to produce those. The archival quality is really important to me. Sometimes I will make prints and collage them onto wood, sometimes I will take prints and cut them up, re-shoot them and bring them into the animation world.

Q. Where do you sell your prints and fine art?

A. Mostly on my website at RichardBorge.com

Q. What features of the new Epson Stylus Pro 3800 appealed to you most?

A. The first thing that struck me was the format. That 17" width is really great. And the overall footprint was quite small which is a big deal when you live in New York with all the space issues. The price was very reasonable too for a printer like this. Plus the multiple paper paths and the ability to print on whatever I want. Lots of things.

Q. What about the Epson UltraChrome K3™ Ink?

A. Very important. Obviously, resolution and archival inks are very important to me, especially when I'm selling prints. Of course, I have just come to assume that Epson is going to be the best in those areas. They always have been.

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Q. What inspires you?

A. I can be inspired by many different things. I will be walking down the street in New York and the funniest thing will catch my eye and it will be like an old piece of plastic that's been run over a million times and it's out in the street all scraped up and stuff. I usually kind of look at it and I walk past it, go another block. I stop. I go back. Eventually, I will pick it up, put it in my bag and that's the thing that ends up on my scanner.

Q. Are there any examples of found objects incorporated into this ad?

A. You see those rays of light that are coming from behind my head? That texture is from a muffin wrapper I found on the sidewalk. I took it and I modified it quite a bit but for the most part I just laid that muffin wrapper on my Epson scanner and scanned it. It's super high resolution and it's pretty amazing. And that yellowish, orange kind of plastic gritty stuff in the background. That's an old piece of scraped up plastic I found on the street. So really, the two main scans that make up the background are from a muffin wrapper and an old scraped up piece of plastic.

Q. Why did you choose the yellow background?

A. We had a handful of different options. The yellow one was kind of the warm one and I did one that was blue with clouds in the background and there was an off-white version that looked like I was standing up against a gritty wall. We chose the yellow one because it was warm and it went really well with the actual print coming out of the printer. It was Sam Yocum's favorite too. He was the photographer.





Q. What are some of the challenges of working with so many elements?

A. The trick is to determine the visual hierarchy. What is going to have the most visual weight. Take this ad. There were so many pieces to the puzzle and it's tricky to make it not look like just a whirlwind of garbage. There's a lot of scaling up and scaling down and doing this and doing that and moving things around. And so much of what we had isn't even in the ad. Kooky little drawings of robots and gears and all that stuff but, ultimately, some of them are going to get cut and it's kind of sad for them, you know?

Q. Do you get attached to inanimate objects?

A. Yeah. Especially when you work alone in your studio so much you really get attached to those things. My old computers are like that too. I just don't have the heart to throw them out on the street. What am I going to get, like \$12. And so many jobs have been pushed through that thing.

Q. Of course, if everyone thought that way there wouldn't be any discarded stuff out on the street for you to be inspired by like muffin wrappers.

A. True.

Q. Ok, so now we know 'what' has inspired you. Can you tell us 'who' has inspired you?

A. I would credit my brother John who is a photographer in Fargo, North Dakota. He was the one who encouraged me the most. He was the one who told me I could do whatever I wanted as long as I was willing to work for it. My mom was an inspiration too. She's into this Norwegian folk painting called Rosemaling and she's just great at it. When I finally told her in my junior year that I wanted to quit premed to be an artist she was kind of relieved like, "Oh good, I always thought you should be doing that." Even my dad who was a doctor was a pretty creative guy. He liked woodwork and building all kinds of things.

Q. Did you grow up in Fargo?

A. Yeah but I moved around a lot after college. North Dakota. Minnesota. Arizona. North Carolina. I went to Grad School in Tucson, Arizona which is where I met my next big influence, a teacher named Jackson Boelts. I think he deserves a round of applause. He made sure that there was always a strong concept and not just a pretty picture.

Q. Earlier, you mentioned that you like to travel. Are any places especially inspiring to you?

A. Bali. It's such an inherently artistic place. I think art is woven into their religion. So everything is art and pattern. I could easily see myself disappearing there for a while. Also, Thailand, Cambodia, Brazil, Costa Rica. All wonderful places and people. I was born in Madagascar so that should be one of my next big trips because I was too young to remember it.

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Q. What's the main difference between commercial and fine art?

A. The biggest difference is who the audience is. In my view, commercial work generally has a more specific purpose and agenda, where as fine art can be more open to interpretation and discovery.





Q. Do some jobs blur the line between commercial and fine art?

A. Sure, lots do. I did a CD cover for a band called Government Mule and it's got this Voodoo doll on the cover. That one is on my web site and that would be a good example of something that I did as a commercial job but I definitely want to sell as limited edition prints because I think it can have an existence beyond simply a CD cover. So again, if you're going to sell something to someone it really needs to be something that's going to last a long time.

Q. How much of your work is commercial versus your fine arts?

A. The fine art really isn't so much. I get so busy with the commercial jobs and the editorial work that I don't have much time to do my own thing. And I don't push it so hard. I'm not one of those guys out there going to the galleries and really trying to get in there. I have also been heavily getting into animation which is also on my site. Animation is the thing that keeps me up all night playing on the computer and losing track of time which is a good sign for me that I'm really into it. Often times, the Epson prints get utilized in the animation process as well and it's interesting that the print then comes in the middle of the process rather than always at the end.

Q. How do you know when you're done?

A. The deadline.

Q. You need a deadline?

A. It definitely helps, especially with a job like this one where there are so many elements that are jumping around on the page and you need to find some kind of balance between all the things. Without a deadline I just chase my tail forever.

Q. Do you do any teaching?

A. Yes, I love teaching. I have taught at the School of Visual Arts in New York, Rhode Island School of Design, and Western Carolina University. My favorite thing is to do these international visiting artist programs. I did two in Paris and one in Montreal. It's usually around a week during breaks and it allows the students to get some extra credit and a different kind of learning experience. It's a chance to give something back. I think I'm just naturally a teacher. If I see a tourist on the subway with their map I'm always the guy that wants to help, to guide. I don't know why, I just like to do that.

