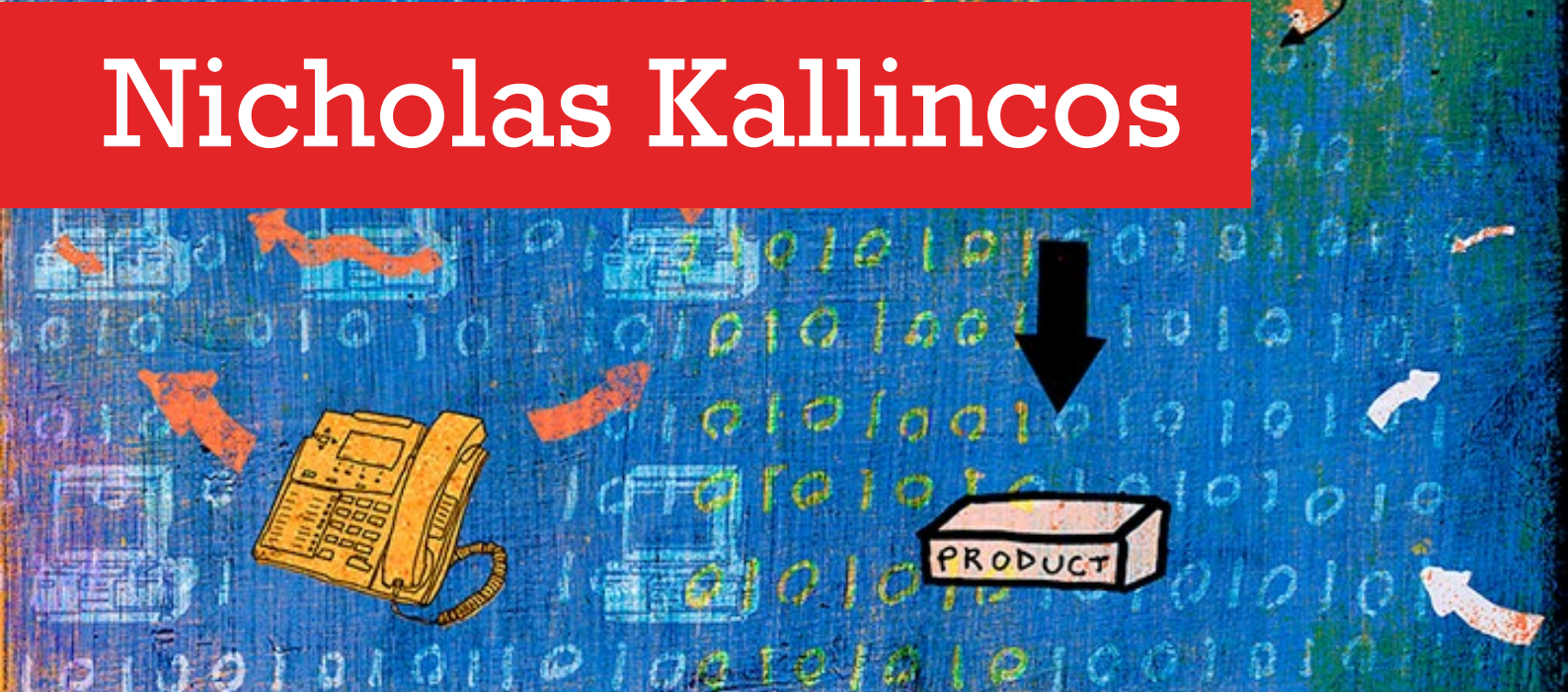




Nicholas Kallincos



Nicholas Kallincos

To me, Nick's paintings, comics, illustrations and animations create a striking exploration of the mind - dark, layered and complex. Outline learns more about Nick's diverse practise and incredible animation work.

Outline: I noticed you studied a PHD in biochemistry before studying animation and interactive media. Could you tell us about this change in career path?

Nick: I guess the most succinct way of answering that is to say that although I was/am absolutely fascinated with science and love the challenge of researching something, the day to day nuts and bolts of working in a lab just didn't work for me on a personal level. A few years after completing my doctoral studies and having worked in a research lab, I found my mind continually wandering to the making of art. I'd been already painting for a few years, cartooning and doing t-shirt designs by this point. Art always felt a natural inclination for me. I think the urge to see what could happen if I threw all my energies into the thing I was passionate about, just took over and I felt I had to find a way to do the art thing in a more comprehensive

way. At the time I really didn't know much about animation but it seemed like a nice half-way point between the analytical skills of science and the more right brain imaginings of the artist. It ticked a few potential boxes as far as getting some useful technological skills and exercising my desire to create. I was in my early 30's when I made the leap but it had been a few years of consideration beforehand to convince myself that I could make a fist of it.

Outline: We'd love to hear about some of your favourite animation projects. How have clients discovered your animation work?

Nick: I've had a few fun projects over the years but probably my favourite project has been the stop-motion cinema ad I did for CRUMPLER back in 2008. It was a hectic little shoot but I was absolutely obsessed with the

Still from Crumpler animation





idea for about a year before I had the chance to make it. I'd been tossing around ideas for something for them for a while but when this particular idea popped into my mind it seemed very visually strong and already clearly visualized in my mind. I was convinced that it would also be a great way to combine the tools used for their bag making with animation. Fortunately they also liked the idea and were fantastic in allowing me so much creative freedom.

Δ <http://vimeo.com/6541905>

I also loved working on "*The Luminary*", which was a film I made in 2005 with an Australian Film Commission grant. It was the first time I got to experiment with stop-motion animation and it was nice to have a budget for a change. The whole process from start to finish (about 5 months of work for 10 minutes of animation) was a fun ride. The story started life as a small doodle in a drawing diary and then became fleshed out in more detail based on a piece of music by a good friend, Cornel Wiczek (QUA). When we received funding to make the short, Cornel kindly agreed to re-score the film. The film has done the festival circuit and enabled me work with some lovely folk, Shannon Owen (my producer), Gus Kemp (cinematographer) and Cornel, whom I had worked with on my student films. I was fortunate to be able to travel to some festivals with the film and to meet some truly talented animators scattered around the world. It also had a second life (post festivals) when it was re-edited in a condensed form as a music video for Powderfinger. I recently made a short (unfunded) sequel of sorts to *The Luminary* called "Re-collection", its been out and around the traps for the past couple of years. It was a more dreamlike/oblique narrative than the original and was shot digitally unlike *The Luminary*, which was actually shot on 16 mm film.

Δ <http://vimeo.com/6510384>

Δ <http://vimeo.com/45065684>

More recently I've been working with a Melbourne company called EcoInnovators on a 3 part educational series around the ideas of sustainable design. The first project, "*Life Pscycle-ology*" was about a little flip phone called Eric sun who consults a Life Pscycle-ologist due to emotional trauma. He gets taken through a past life regression where he finds out where he came from and why he might be suffering a mobile phone existential crisis. I'm just finishing off the third animation in the series at the moment. It should hit the internet waves in a month or so.

Δ <http://vimeo.com/25749340>

Clients seem to come from a range of sources, quite often they have seen my work online, through someone else or through my network. I think having a science background has opened some doors for me with my work on occasion. Other times it's through someone seeing my work at a festival or on TV. I think having had a diverse background has meant I have a rather large network, which has definitely helped with work opportunities.

Outline: What programs and methods do you use creating your work? For instance, the mixed media work:

Δ <http://vimeo.com/73937155>

contains so many beautiful textures, photography, drawing and stop motion - how does one combine these?!

Nick: I work across a range of mediums but mainly it



depends on the idea. I'll work in different ways depending upon the initial idea and what might suit it. I use photoshop, flash, aftereffects, Final Cut Pro and various assorted stop motion capture softwares. Pretty much anything except 3D programs so far, although hopefully one day (if I ever wrap my head around them!) I'll employ them in some way too. I think texture and emotional impact is what I'm after in my work, so most of it has a fairly roughly hewn look and a certain "grittiness" to it. I like to have some immediacy or spontaneity in the process, so keeping drawings rough allows me to satisfy that urge. The piece you mentioned was as an adjunct to a painting exhibition I held last year, so I was going for a fairly ephemeral mood to compliment what I'd been painting. It was also to try to show my chaotic studio process a little. I combined all of the different media in aftereffects to put it all together..

Outline: I absolutely love your website. Could you tell us about your process setting this up, and building animation into the design of it?

Nick: I really can't take credit for the website as it was made by a friend of mine, Rohan Latimer. He is a super talented and imaginative coder, not to mention a nice guy. I gave him a pretty open brief of wanting something filmic that was a little like a drawing diary and he came up with the clever design that enables things to behave the way they do. All the screen assets I created by hand. The little loading page intro and filmic little main page I animated in Flash. The arrow tree is a little personal icon of mine that has been in my painting work since I first left science, so it was nice to make it move. The other animation is based on an ink drawing I did years ago that is also on my business card and speaks volumes about the dangers of using a mobile phone near a Shaman in a thunder storm. Just don't do it kids! I'm in the throes of rethinking my website in the age of smart phones that don't support Flash anymore Arrgh! (that was supposed to be angst, not a Pirate).

Outline: Could you tell us about your involvement with the MELBOURNE NOW exhibition? What was your experience being part of this huge exhibition?

Nick: I was very excited that the animations were included as part of the show. It might be the only time I ever get to see my work at the NGV. Basically the animations I did in collaboration with EcoInnovators were showcased as part of the emerging face of design. Leyla Acaroglu who is the director of EcoInnovators

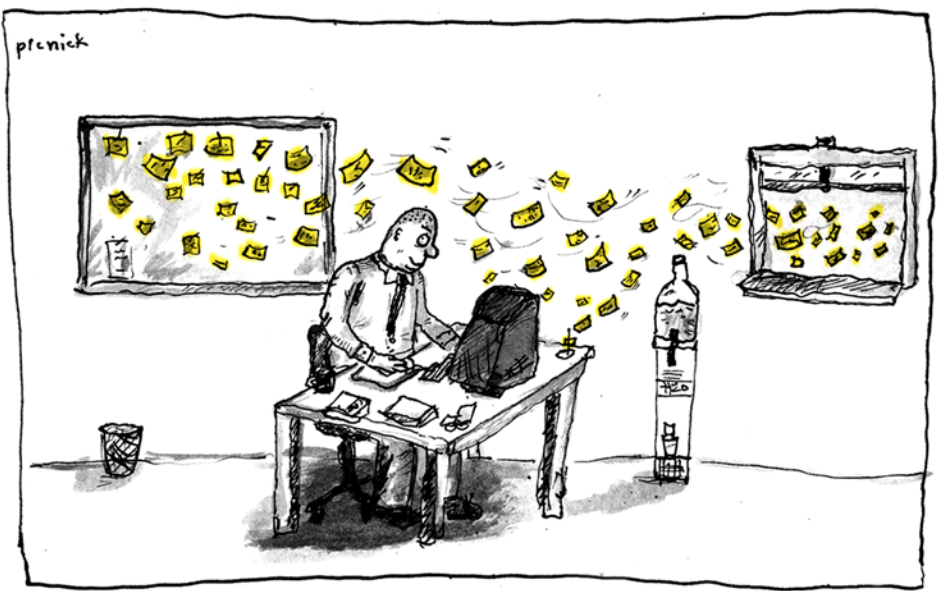
is a very innovative practitioner in the realm of sustainable design education. She realized that animation could be a powerful way to engage younger people in thinking more sustainably about design practice. It was great to see the first two animations presented so fittingly in the space, I was really happy with the way they looked. The show itself was rather overwhelming it terms of the diversity of the artists and kinds of work. I found it really inspiring to see such an enormous cross-section of artists represented at the show and to see how their practices converged and diverged from one another. Pretty mindblowing and a nice way to spend half a day at a gallery.

Outline: Your painterly work is so beautiful and complex. What themes do you explore in this work. Have you recently begun working more in this area, or have you always combined animation/illustration and painting work?

Nick: Thanks for the kind words about my work. In a



nutshell I think a lot of my recent work has revolved around the creation of imaginative spaces where things don't behave like they do in our conventional day to day activities. There is some relationship to our mundane goings on but there is also something "other", something more mysterious and out of reach, that is happening. I guess they are like painted day dreams. The recent work is both influenced by my background in the world of science and also by meditation practices. The themes are generally philosophical in nature, birth, death, love, loss. I'm interested in the processes of perception and cognition and I guess the painting process is a way of me asking some questions of myself and the world around me. I've been painting since before I became involved in animation. The two worlds are constantly rubbing off on one another in my work. I think the urge to make things move was evident in a lot of my painting and illustration work well

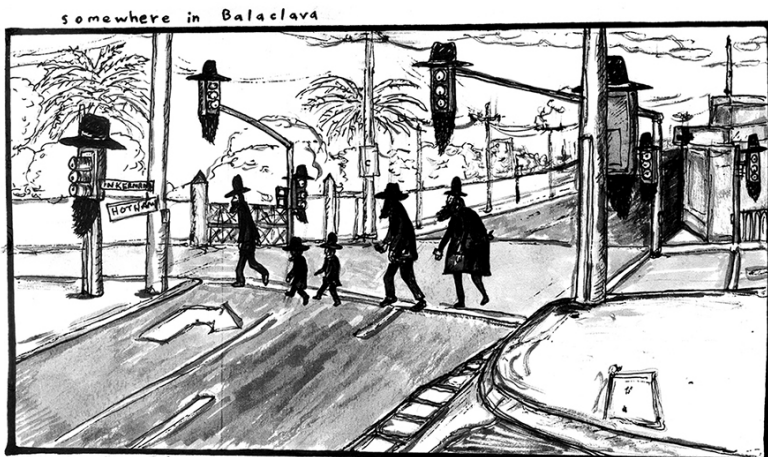


The annual post-it-note migration had taken Harry by surprise

before I ever had the skills to make that occur. In terms of illustration I've been doing that alongside the painting work since I was back at uni studying science. In those days I did a lot of cartooning work with india ink that gradually evolved into something more textural as I got some photoshop skills and started exploring some other mediums. I think my painting has some illustrative elements but also a lot of more abstract expressionist, leanings. I'm a big fan of art brut, outsider art and more primitive art styles but I'm also a sucker for working with the figure (or rather my strange version of the figure). Over the years I've developed my own little system of symbols that re-occur in my works and contribute to the narratives of the paintings in different ways depending on their usage. I've always liked the idea of secret codes. I think they are interesting even if you can't necessarily work them out. A bit like life I guess.

Outline: We'd love to hear of your plans (illustration wise or otherwise) for the year ahead.

Nick: No concrete plans at the moment really. I'm spending more and more time teaching (animation) in the past couple of years, which I enjoy. In between my teaching roles I try to get into the studio to paint and let my imagination fly. I'm finishing off the third animation in the "secret life of things series" at the moment but when that is done I'm not sure what beckons in terms of animation. I've also just finished a couple of album covers for some local musicians and I'm talking with someone at the moment about animating a science related piece later in the year. At some stage I'd love to try to make another little narrative short of some kind and finish a little comic I started last year about our cat. So many possibilities so little time. We shall see. ●



{CLICK!} Nick Kallincos

Website <http://www.picnick.com.au>