

Interview Ben&Julia IdN Magazine + DVD International Edition Issue no v16n3 2009



HIGHLIGHTED MOTION CONTENT FROM:
EXERCISE IN CHARACTER-BUILDING
FULL ARTICLE ON PG.008-PG.013



Galettes Saint Michel / Espace by Ben & Julia 00:18:20

Characters behind the characters

Following last issue's fantastic exclusive interview with Jonas & François, we are pleased to present in their own words in this issue, three creative studios known for their cute characters. Ben & Julia, Ben West and Sticky Monster Lab hail from France, Australia and South Korea respectively. They each have a unique style and expertise in creating characters. The interview with Ben & Julia - Benoit Créac'h and Julia Gaudard - comes from a Glitter TV show hosted by their Cyclop Puppet and provides some fascinating insights into the relationship

between creators and creation. In another video interview, Australian director Ben West explains how he works as a director, animator and writer, his only constraints being self-imposed. Take a look at his acclaimed short films *The Arsonist's Riddle* and *Freaks* - they are ideal examples of his diverse style.

The three core members of South Korean collective Sticky Monster Lab use their interview to transform themselves into some

of their most notable characters. They tell us how they go about working with international brands and how music has been their inspiration. Note the location of the interview - a very traditional Korean house and garden of a kind that many of you may never have seen before.

Ben & Julia: www.benandjulia.com
Ben West: benwest.net.au
Sticky Monster Lab: www.stickymonsterlab.com

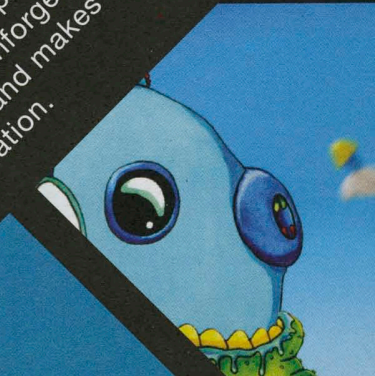
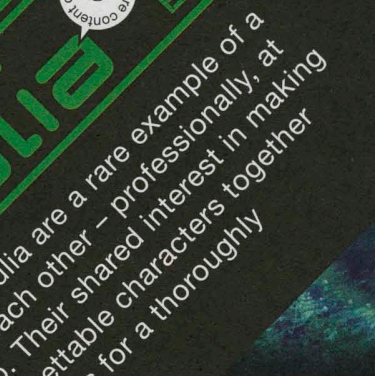
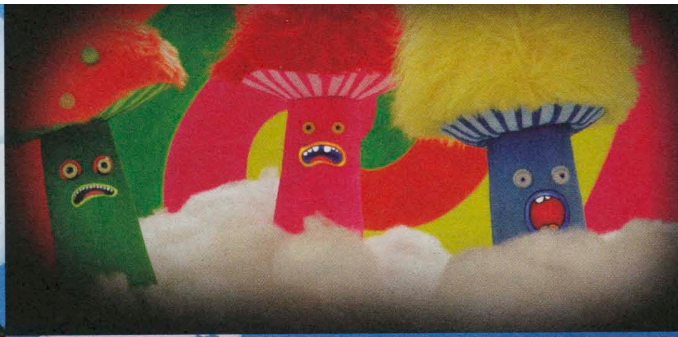
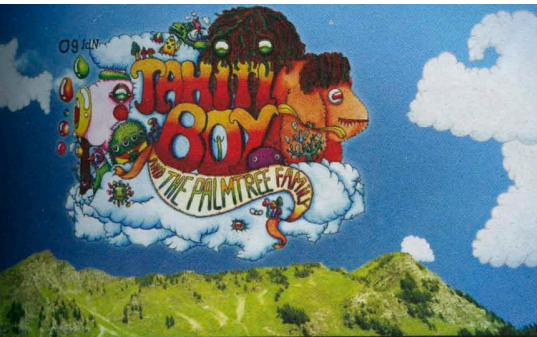


ITW IdN + Cyclop Puppet by Ben & Julia 03:51:83



1973 MV for Tahiti Boy and the Palmtree Family by Ben & Julia 03:32:04





Ben & Julia

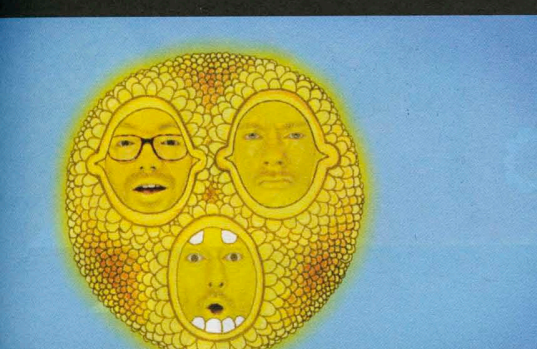
The French-Swiss pair Ben & Julia are a rare example of a couple that seem made for each other – professionally, at least, a perfect partnership. Their shared interest in making puppets and creating unforgettable characters together cements their union and makes for a thoroughly enjoyable collaboration.

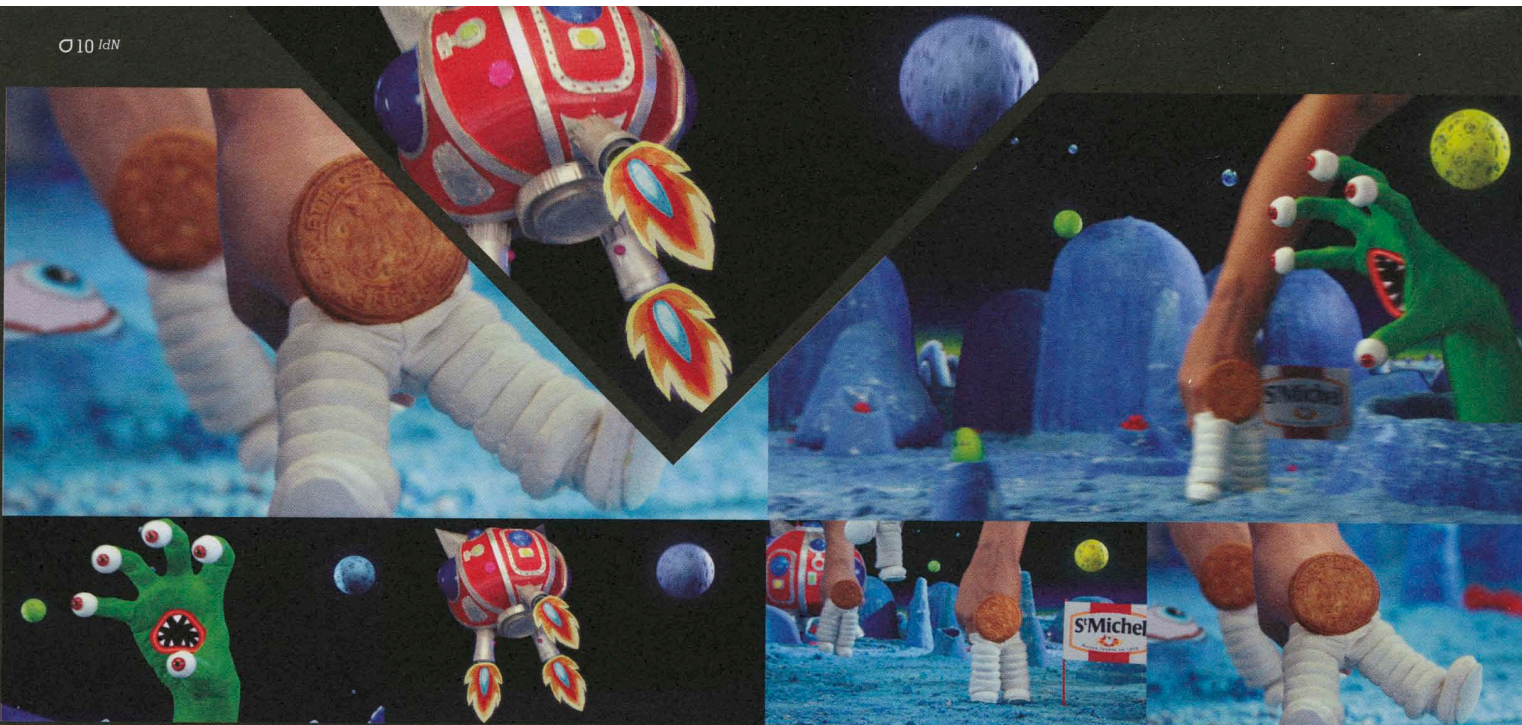


Planning to move shortly from Paris to Berlin, Benoit Créac'h and Julia Gaudard are in search of more space in which to display their creations. Seven years ago, when Gaudard had just finished her studies at Central Saint Martins in London, she met Créac'h at a mycology (the study of fungi) conference. At that time, he had also just graduated – from film school. After a spell working for a TV channel and then an ad agency, they decided to team up as a freelance duo.

They use marionettes and craft-work to present their ideas. In their latest music video, 1973 for French band Tahiti Boy and the Palmtree Family, they have created 51 different characters, both as real objects and via animation. They believe that to be successful, a character should "fit in with other characters in the universe you are creating, making it look true, desirable and cool to live in". Their own favourite characters in the video are Buzzy Bear and Champon.

Coming up with so many characters for a three-minute video requires a lot of hard work – and plenty of passion. Said Créac'h: "I think 'a lot of work' is what most defines our creative process. We made lots of sketches for the puppets and for the cartoon part, some tests for the tracking and for the puppetry. Then Julia came up with the idea of listening to the track on headphones while falling asleep." As result, the video turned into a surreal and imaginative fictional journey.





Sometimes, Gaudard likes to play with the puppets for inspiration and to 'discover' their personalities. She believes that you have to really get to know a character to be able to bring it thoroughly to life. Créac'h and Gaudard describe their style as one that is alive and developing, evolving through their various projects. So they keep working with new elements, ideas and techniques.

Créac'h takes care of the technical side of things while Gaudard is responsible for the art direction. "She is a

perfectionist, whereas I tend to let things slip a bit more," admits Créac'h. "This is why, in the end, I really love watching our work as it allows me to appreciate enormously her input, which I can sense in every image that we produce." By the same token, Gaudard appreciates his sense of humour and drawing talent.

Colour is a significant element of their work, helping to create an optimistic and colourful world. "For me, colour always adds something more to the creation," says

Gaudard. "I find it fascinating to work on mixing colour, but it is a long process and requires a lot of testing." Ben & Julia now work mainly on TV commercials and music videos. They are hoping to stage an exhibition in Berlin and develop more personal projects in film.

