



FAQ

Q: How did you get started in the arts?

A: We both started drawing from an early age, perhaps this had something to do with the rather boring neighborhoods we lived in... and it rains a lot in the Netherlands so when we couldn't play outside we sat inside to draw. We actually didn't really plan ahead to make our 'job' out of drawing but somehow we both ended up studying illustration in art school, doing the thing we liked most.

Q: Where do you draw your inspiration from?

A: From a lot of things! Old books and posters, decorations and illustrations from the middle ages to the nineteen seventies. Internet is a big inspiration source, we spend a lot of time there :) Looking at great work by nice artists on websites like flickr.com and, of course, this website :) brings a lot of inspiration as well. Besides that, we also love big cities, collect all sorts of toys and second hand and retro stuff, records, old photo's and such. So that probably inspires us well.

Q: Would you describe yourself as a character designer, or just an illustrator? What are the main differences?

A: We're Illustrators who do a lot of character design :) We love drawing and character design is one of the best parts of it and has become one of our specialities probably. But we enjoy creating a nice infographic or cityscape just as much.

Q: How has your style evolved since you first started out, and what were the main catalysts for this happening?

A: One thing we are always trying to master is simplicity. We don't (or hardly ever) use outlines in our work anymore, it's still something we're often struggling with. Making something work without the use of outlines makes us carefully consider the use of colours and contrast because it tends to miss balance if not chosen well.

In search for simplicity we also recently managed to limit our use of gradients. We used to create gradient-heavy work, but it also often felt a little bit like cheating. A gradient can be an easy way to intensify an illustration or make shapes or parts stand out or create contrast between two shapes. Now that we don't use gradients all the time we also have to think and revise shapes and colours to make something pop, which is easier with gradients. We do like to use gradients though, but it is more fun to make something work without them.

And one other thing that has changed is limiting details. It's actually the same as with the gradients. It's easier to make something work with a lot of detail and we like to create a lot of detail. But it's a bigger challenge to create something stripped from all unnecessary detail and colours but still give it the same intensity and tell the same story.

We use a lot of character based elements & lot's of color. We'll try to keep our illustrations as simple & symetric as possible. We didn't really choose this way of working, it's a growing proces.



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Q: For you, what are the ingredients of a great character?

A: We don't have an answer to that. Character design is almost limitless. If it works, it works. It's probably something you see when it's there.

You can draw very simple 'characters' and use very simple elements to give him/her/it his own personality and characteristics. Most of the time it doesn't need much. but the placement of the eyes/ mouth are very important for the looks.

Q: and how do you go about injecting personality into them?

A: We like to make them a bit silly... one eye, six eyes, boss-eyed. Dumb looks on their faces, mostly very naive. We use simple details like a checkered shirt or seams on pants, a belt or some buttons on a robot. And we like clichés, things that are very recognisable. Like biker outfits or use an onion or something other familiar for a head. It's not really something we think about, it's just what pops in our mind.

Q: What aspect of character design is commonly misunderstood by clients or lay people from your experience?

A: ... this is a difficult question... I think some clients/ people think it's easy to draw (simple) characters and it don't take a lot of time to create one.

But it takes a lot of time to give a character the right 'look' or personality. If the character is very simple it takes even more time. It has to look simple but it must get the right feel with very less elements.

Q: What is your most common approach for completing a project?

A: With most of our clients we have email contact and we discuss the project and what they like via email, sometimes by phone. Then we start thinking, sketching, making a nice rough and send it to the client, wait for feedback and if everything is ok we start working out the sketches on our computer. That's about it really.

Q: What can your work be applied to commercially?

A: Our speciality is character design and more graphical based illustrations but we don't feel this limits us in the projects we do. We've done magazines and newspapers, commercials, advertisement, walldesigns and tv shows, infographics and websites. We designed shirts and prints on shoes and worked on games, product and package designs and created toys but still there's lots of things we would love to do!

Q: Who are your top clients?

A: The best known names we worked for are probably Samsung, Heineken, Mercedes-Benz, Converse, Google, Pepsi, and Virgin but amongst our top clients are also less internationally well known clients like NMBS (Belgian Railroads)