

# Clifton Harvey

I enjoy the dialogue between a work of art and the viewer and how unexpected conclusions can be drawn based on our unique experiences. These unpredictable associations may not be consciously made by the viewer, but rather felt deeply, like a sensation of nostalgia for something they never personally experienced. Even before I could read, the experiences I had with viewing images shaped how I would later create my work. As a child, I remember watching Mickey's Christmas Carol and feeling deeply wounded as a heartbroken Mickey Mouse placed an abandoned crutch next to Tiny Tim's grave. The pathos depicted in that moment left a lasting impression and inspired me to create my own narratives.

I discovered photography while in college and was fascinated by the camera's ability to freeze a moment. I began to experiment with digitally combining my illustrations into environments I photographed, allowing ideas in one medium to inform and inspire concepts for the other, resulting in my own kind of photographic truth. Working in a directorial mode, I precisely arranged the elements in my shots, which served as a reference for lighting and perspective while setting a dramatic stage for my illustrated creations. The culmination of these labors resulted in my thesis work, *Left Behind*. A meditation on personal indignities and an allegory on the passing of childhood, the graphic narrative approach to this work is expanded upon in my latest series, *The Conductor*.

Drawing upon influences such as comic books, film, cartoons like *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies*, and the dark visions depicted in Goya's *Los Caprichos*, my aim was to create a narrative that explored the theme of disappointment while attempting to cope with the shame of unfulfilled ambitions. The passage from the book of Matthew, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth", served as a conceptual starting point. I asked myself "who are the meek and what happens when they inherit the earth?" I imagined a deserted world now inhabited by a variety of creatures that were broken, in both body and spirit. Among this host, I specifically pictured a displaced corporate mascot, abandoned by a society that once revered him, a stilted beast of burden who has grown complacent with being manipulated, and a puddle-bellied brute fascinated with



Lost and Found Composite photo illustration 16.37" x 8"

socks. Scenarios involving these characters and others came to mind that forced me to question how we might reclaim our own missing parts and whether some things are worth mending. The bleak world of *The Conductor* is a place I plan on continuing to explore in future works.



Dreadful Delights Composite photo illustration 12.45" x 8"



An Empty Offer Composite photo illustration 12.45" x 8"



At the Gaping Threshold Composite photo illustration 15" x 8"

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**www.CliftonHarveyArt.com**