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The Unruly Alphabet: Letters on Their Baddest Behavior
The Primitivism of Each Letter, Captured in Dynamic Ink and Acrylic Illustration

What if the letter A were an aggressive drunk who got into barroom brawls with his neighbor, B? Taking the term “word play” literally, illustrator Aaron McKinney sets the alphabet against a backdrop of rebellious behavior in *The Unruly Alphabet*. From hurling to undressing, McKinney’s bold renderings are darkly comical. By revealing the devilish characters embodied by each letter, they visually showcase human nature.

Aggressive and detailed, McKinney’s cantankerous glyphs compete in strange and nightmarish ways—C is chased by a devouring D, M mauls a napping N, and S swallows and terrorizes T.

“I’ve always been interested in etymology,” McKinney says. “The way words, a human constructed concept, play off one another to somehow convey thought and expression in our minds fascinates me. With that thought in mind, I decided to strip language down to its most primitive form, the alphabet. To make it interesting, I anthropomorphized each letter with some of humanity’s most common, despicable traits. With each letter playing off the next, the end result is the alphabet, a pretty inorganic and deliberate thing made more barbarically human.”

About the Author:

Aaron McKinney was born in Great Yarmouth, England in 1977. He was fortunate enough to spend his childhood scattered across the world from Scotland to Indonesia to Egypt. The constant upheaval caused him to turn inward and he began expressing his thoughts through art at a very young age. He attended Ringling College of Art and Design where he received a BFA in Illustration. Aaron’s artwork combines a childlike fixation on funny creatures and odd hybrids with a peculiar, nightmarish monumentalism. Bold colors and watercolored, color block backgrounds frame the pieces, while fairytale-ish spotlights illuminate key players. But the key is the absolute believability of his completely fantastical, fabricated reality. Whatever the assignment, his work is always highly original and strikingly recognizable. His artwork has appeared in numerous publications and galleries throughout the United States and abroad. Aaron lives and works in Atlanta with his beautiful and inspiring wife Jen and their two Children Lola & Jude. He’s currently working on a children’s book.

About Mark Batty Publisher

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By Aaron McKinney

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