

# Colored Tape on Glass Makes Matisse-Inspired Minimalist Illustrations

DJ Pangburn (/author/DJPangburn) — Feb 9 2017



Images courtesy the artist

In the *Handmade* series, artist [Eric Petersen](http://ericpetersen.us.com/handmade) (<http://ericpetersen.us.com/handmade>) keeps the glass but ditches the stain, opting instead to make minimalist and often surreal translucent illustrations with various colored but transparent films and tapes. Like his digital illustration work, the *Handmade* series features vibrant solid colors, [clean and minimal linework](http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/fine-art-flower-tattoos-south-korean-artist) (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/fine-art-flower-tattoos-south-korean-artist>), and a hint of [psychedelia and surrealist Pop art](http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/vibrant-collages-create-dream-worlds-through-pop-art) (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/vibrant-collages-create-dream-worlds-through-pop-art>).

The Joshua Tree-based artist tells The Creators Project that he began illustrating back in 2012 while living in Olympia, Washington. He had been working in web development for several years, then took a brief detour into 3D technical illustration. Unsatisfied in both areas, at the urging of his wife, Petersen started making art based on his background and interest in drawing and graphic design.





Petersen says his work isn't influenced by any contemporary illustrators. Instead, he has found inspiration in the works of Henri Matisse, Alexander Rodchenko, and the look of *Action Comics*

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*Superman* of the late 30s and early 40s. And though his work occasionally bears a resemblance to French illustrator master Moebius, Petersen was unfamiliar with his work before discovering his own style, though he amidst his influence may have crept in anyway.

“The colors I use are a result of me playing in Photoshop,” Petersen says. “I create layers of gradients over base colors and blend them until I am happy with what I see. The way I frame my characters and spaces are a result of me playing with the camera and lenses in a 3D environment. I feel like a photographer when I am doing this.”



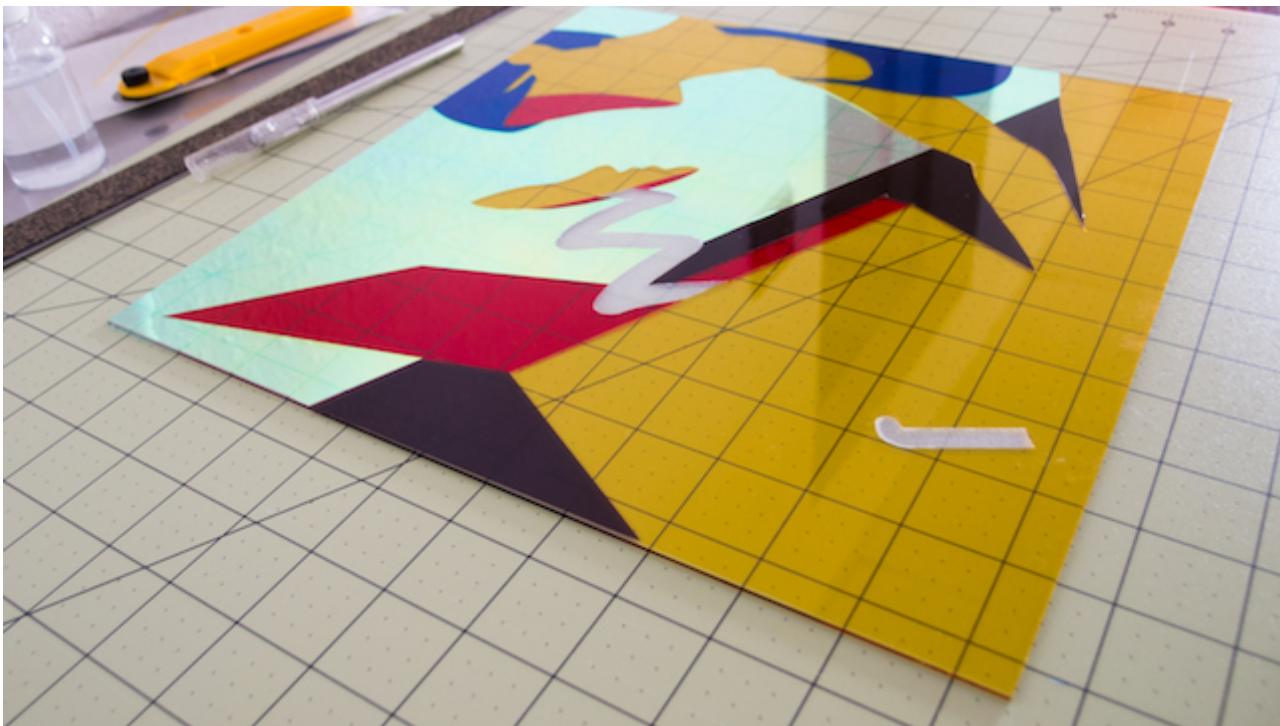
The works in the *Handmade* series grow out of these 2D and 3D digital processes. First, Petersen thinks of a visual idea. Then, he starts posing 3D characters and crafting a 3D scene. After rendering the image, Petersen draws over the render in Illustrator, then colors it in Photoshop.

From there, he uses optically-clear color polyester films and crepe paper graphic tape on a glass surface. He also uses transparent dichroic film, which allows the colors to change depending on the viewing angle. Petersen uses a craft knife to cut the elements of the scene, then hand-tapes everything on glass. He was familiar and comfortable with taping from his time working at an architecture firm, where he created borders on white foamcore for the interior design department.



“Adhesive color film is carefully applied to the back of the glass,” Petersen explains. “The tape is on the front of the glass. This creates some texture and allows for a shadow depending on the light source.”

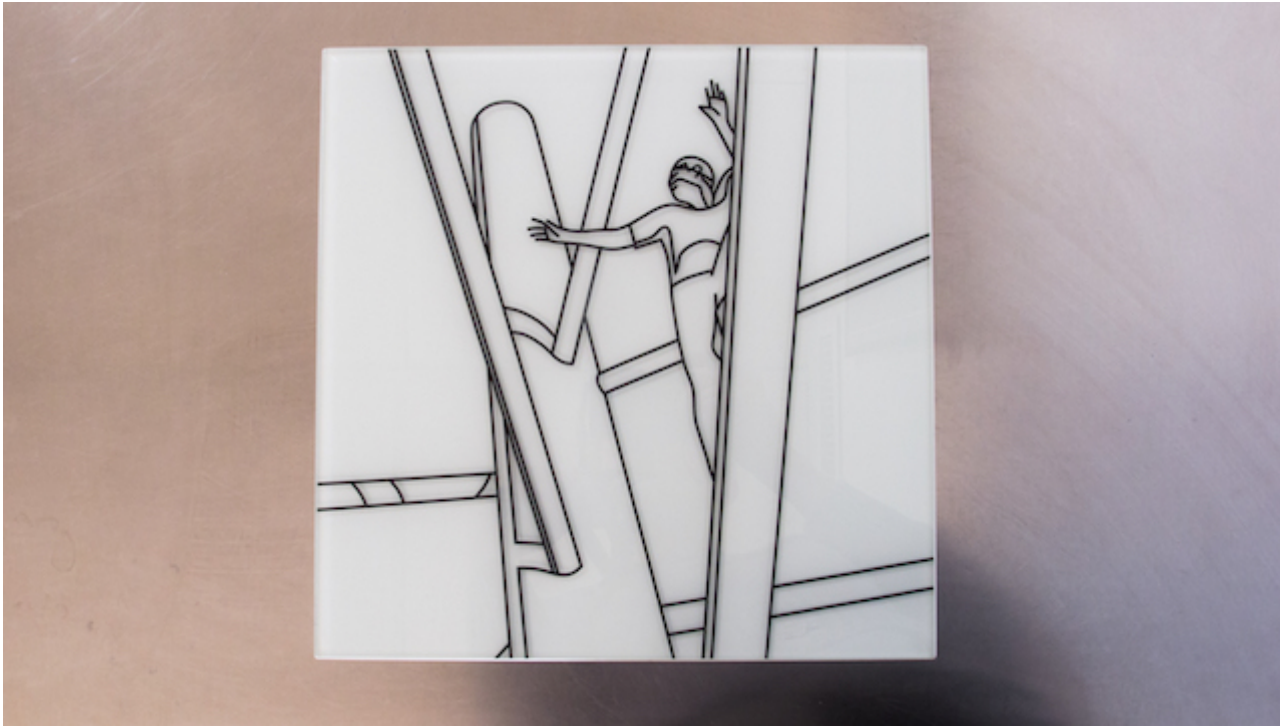
“I like the idea of working with film and tape on glass because I find it to be closest to my digital process,” he adds. “I use blocks of color digitally as I do with the color film. I can layer things on the glass as I do in Photoshop. The tape linework is very similar to the lines I create in Illustrator with Bézier curves.”





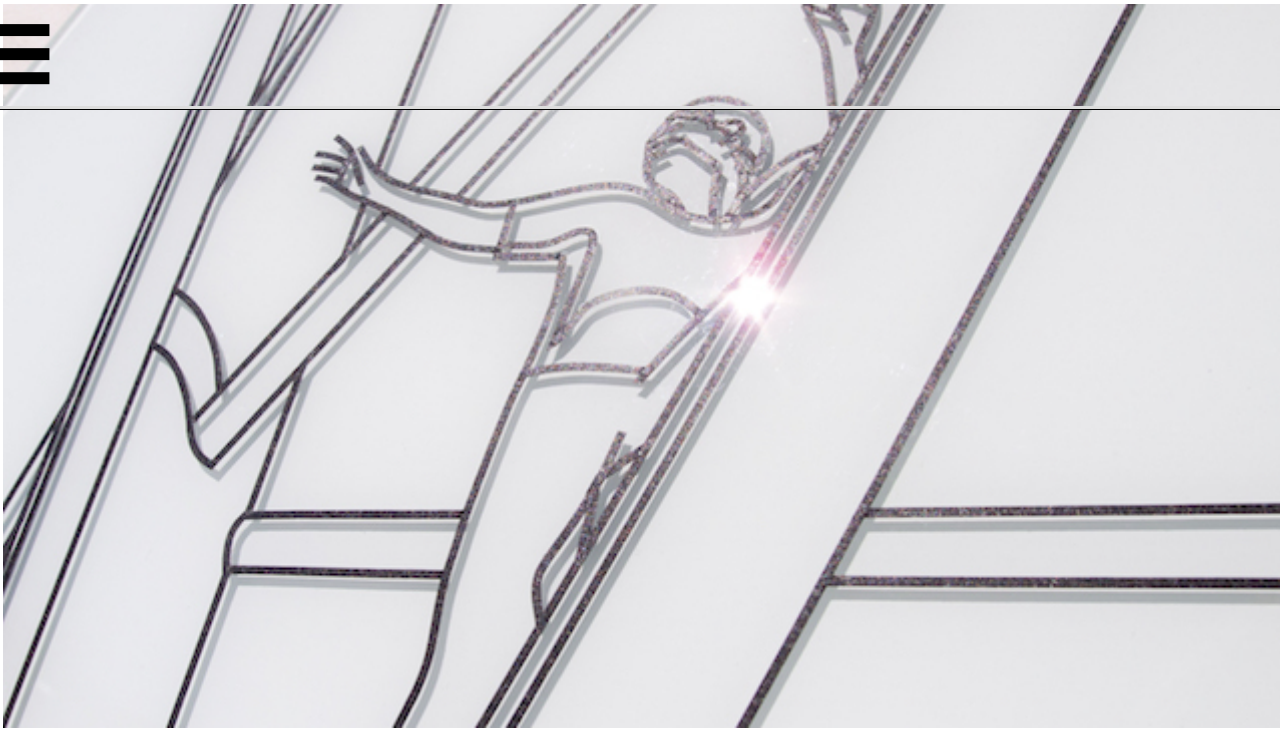
Though Petersen's work is highly colorful, he only recently started playing with vibrant hues. The clean linework, on the other hand, is a result of his inclination towards minimalism, where there is an impulse to "display ideas in a very functional, authoritative manner similar to instruction manuals."

"I think it is fair to say that there are elements of surrealism, absurdity and psychedelia," says Petersen. "This was never my intention from the start, but I definitely see it and did appreciate the dada movement."



"The subject matter just comes to me as a visual idea from random thoughts," he adds. "My goal is to get people to feel something in a personal way from these emotionless, precisely-drawn characters in minimal scenes. I think removing the complexity from the image while adding bold vibrant colors and a sense of real atmosphere through gradients and light helps achieve this."

Though he enjoys working with color, Petersen is also working in black-and-white with bolder lines on opaque glass. For him, *Handmade* is a chance to see how he can transform digital works into something new and, ideally, discover the next steps in the series.



[Click here \(http://ericpetersen.us.com/\)](http://ericpetersen.us.com/) to see more of Eric Petersen's work.

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