



Nicholas Ahrens-Townsend

Nicholas Ahrens-Townsend, born in Winnipeg in 1985, has been drawing characters from stories, superheroes, and cartoons since age 3. He took high-school art classes, where a favourite teacher taught him to move from drawing from his imagination to drawing from real life. He later gravitated toward Digital Multimedia Technology at Red River, and entered Cinema Studies at the University of Montréal. He studied texts on manual animation and made careful observations of anatomy. He became interested in the techniques of Disney cartoons and the work of Japanese manga artist and animator Osamu Tezuka. Nick finds circuit boards aesthetically pleasing and has a hobby of researching and building computers. For his current work on paper with pen and ink (sometimes a quill pen for calligraphic effect), Nick has invented a very precise shading technique with meandering, maze-like continuous lines – leaving an impression of pixelation. “I had a digitally-based education and I’m the product of the digital age. So I find this way of rendering texture fits with the way we consume and perceive the world.” Nick adds, “I often draw images destined for the internet, directly into the computer from a digital photo on screen, using a drawing tablet, while listening to digital music on headphones.” His subjects include graphic novels and other emotionally charged narratives, often tender, touching, mystical, philosophical or psychological. “It’s all about understanding people, their dynamic selves – which amounts to understanding myself,” he says. Nick says his core values include kindness, positivity, inclusivity, and a holistic approach to art and to life. Art, he says, helps him to reflect and solve problems.