

LIFESTYLE

HOFF INVASION »

13 David Hasselhoff's presence seems to make even the biggest events more monumental.

CHARITABLE FASHION »

15 A student clothing company hopes to change the way consumers think about fashion and its purpose.

FOOD MYTHS

USC professor Barry Glassner critiques absurd diet fads and examines the way Americans think about food.



12

USC dropout makes it big in animation

Dan Povenmire, known for his work on cartoons such as "The Simpsons" and "Family Guy," lands a show on Disney.

By **LAUREN PEREZ**
Daily Trojan

You've heard of SpongeBob SquarePants and the infamous Hannah Montana, now the latest and greatest in children's entertainment is "Phineas and Ferb," created by former USC student Dan Povenmire and his working partner, Jeff "Swampy" Marsh.

"I'm just a dropout, I'm a cautionary tale," said Povenmire, who spent 1985 to 1987 at USC trying, and failing, to get into the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

Povenmire's life, however, has been anything but a cautionary tale. Besides creating "Phineas and Ferb," he has also written, directed and created storyboards for animated shows such as "The Simpsons," "Family Guy," "Rocko's Modern Life," "Hey Arnold!," "Catsdog," "Looney Tunes" and "SpongeBob SquarePants."

A child prodigy, Povenmire started drawing at the age of two. By the time he was 10, he was selling his work at art shows.

At the University of South Alabama, he started a comic strip while making a living acting and waiting tables at dinner theater.

Interested in filmmaking, Povenmire transferred to USC where his comic strip, "Life is a Fish," became his first big success.

Povenmire said the first thing he did when he got to USC was pitch the comic to *Daily Trojan* editor-in-chief Mark Ordesky, who now works for Fine Line Cinema where he was the executive producer of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

Initially, Povenmire said

Ordesky "basically brushed me off," but after looking through Povenmire's portfolio, Ordesky invited him to make the comic a part of the paper.

The comic strip ran in the *Daily Trojan* everyday, continuing for five years even after Povenmire left USC.

"I always felt like I was running out of ideas," Povenmire said.

But, he never missed a deadline.

The comic about the secret life of a gold fish became so popular that Povenmire was able to make \$14,000 a year selling "Life is a Fish" books, T-shirts and calendars at the campus crafts fair.

After dropping out of USC, he used the money he made from the craft fairs and being a street caricature artist to support himself.

Eventually, Povenmire got a call from an old USC friend who had a friend who needed someone to work in animation.

Two phone calls later, Povenmire was talking to Tommy Chong of "Cheech and Chong."

He was hired to create two minutes of animation for Chong's film, "Far out Man."

By the age of 21, Povenmire was working with the animation teams behind the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" animated series.

Povenmire continued to freelance for other shows until he ended up doing layout and storyboard for "The Simpsons."

When he showed his five years' worth of "Life is a Fish" comic strips to the creator of Nickelodeon's "Rocko's Modern Life," the creator was so impressed that he gave Povenmire a job as a writer.



Photo courtesy of Sebastien Rabany/Disney Channel
Animated success | Former *Daily Trojan* cartoonist Dan Povenmire (left) and his partner, Jeff Marsh (right), recently debuted their new animated television show, "Phineas and Ferb," on the Disney Channel.

While working on "Rocko's Modern Life," Povenmire met his future working partner, Jeff "Swampy" Marsh.

In 1993, Povenmire and Marsh created "Phineas and Ferb."

Initially, Disney also said no to "Phineas and Ferb," but the company asked to keep the packet Povenmire presented.

"Usually that means they throw it in the trash later," Povenmire said.

This time was different, however.

Sixteen years after it was initially created, Disney began running "Phineas and Ferb" at the beginning of this year.

Now, all of Povenmire's time is divided between his family and "Phineas and Ferb."

Besides being the show's creator, director, executive producer and songwriter, Povenmire is also the voice of the evil Dr. Doofenshmirtz whose plans for world domination are frequently thwarted by one of the character's seemingly mind-

less pet, Perry the Platypus, who doubles as a secret agent.

Povenmire said he likes the idea of pets having secret lives because "nobody really knows what a platypus does."

His own cat, Sprocket, had a secret life with his neighbor so that he could get fed twice.

"Phineas and Ferb" is the leading television series in children's entertainment, surpassing "Hannah Montana," "The Suite Life of Zack

| see **POVENMIRE**, page 14 |



Photo courtesy of Lisa Wood

Unreal | One example of artist Lisa Wood's pieces in her exhibit, "Swallowing Plates," shows a young boy who swallowed a crow's leg.

Artist inspired by work of laryngologist

Exhibit captures the sentiment of the Victorian Era through fictionalized choking victims.

By **DANIELLE CHARBONNEAU**
Daily Trojan

The title of Lisa Wood's exhibit, "Swallowing Plates: Objects Swallowed and Recovered from the Human Body," conjures up images of cold, rusted steel pliers digging into a victim to remove a foreign object from their gullet.

With this grotesque image in mind, one might expect to see a new-age, avant-garde exhibit befitting for lovers of dark abstract art.

So when wandering into the cozy and welcoming Gold Bug gallery in upscale Downtown Pasadena, one might become confused, wondering if he or she got the right address.

The wall showcasing the exhibit is not adorned with gory images of medical miracles, but rather is dressed in Victorian

era china plates that serve as the canvases for Wood's art.

Each plate, reminiscent of what one might find in his grandmother's china cabinet, is ornately decorated with frills from old clothing, old buttons, decoratively twisted wire and other odds and ends one might find at an antique shop.

Behind a glass covering, each plate displays a small black and white photograph of a person from the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Next to each photo, are miniature objects — a knife, a Christmas ornament, sewing needles, a baby doll's eye ball — each representing an object which the person in the photograph near-fatally swallowed.

The exhibit is inspired by the work of Chevalier Jackson, a revered laryngologist who essentially invented the modern science of endoscopy of the upper airway in the 19th century, saving choking victims who would have otherwise died.

Wood found inspiration from Jackson when she viewed a collection of objects that he removed from his patients.

The objects were lined in a glass case at the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia.

Wood was intrigued by the exhibit, but not satisfied.

"I wanted more," Wood said. "I wanted a story, I wanted a face, I wanted to just embellish [the objects]."

So she set out to put a face and story to every object. She took a year gathering materials and photographs from flea markets and junk yards across the county and developing imaginary, but plausible, stories of Jackson's patients.

In creating these fictionalized tales, Woods recreated the Victorian era sentiment of Jackson's accomplishments.

The era was an exciting one — medicine and technology were on the verge of advancement. Yet, there was a certain anxiousness,

| see **PLATES**, page 19 |

PLATES: Swallowed items create atypical art exhibit

| continued from page 11 |

fear and sadness.

People would die daily of sicknesses modern society would find hard to comprehend.

"[The era] was right on the border of being new," said Wood. "But it was a scary time."

This juxtaposition can be found in Wood's pieces: The black and white, dreary photographs in which each person has a straight face and stiff body fit oddly in the colorful and ornate lusciousness of the decorations that surround them.

The pieces denote the vibrancy of Jackson's new life-saving techniques ready to make medical history, yet they also denote the harsh reality in which his patients lived in.

This stark reality is also reflected in Wood's self-created stories in which many of the characters were swallowing obscure things as a means to

commit suicide.

One woman, as Wood's story tells, swallowed her engagement ring after a tiff with her significant other.

Another swallowed needles and a sharp piece of mirror hoping to pierce her intestines and stomach.

"It was a painful way to go," Wood said.

Luckily Jackson was able to save many of his patients from such pain by removing the objects successfully.

The exhibit serves as a reminder of how far society has come over the centuries.

It possesses an eerie recollection of hard times, yet the optimism of a highly progressive society.

◆ *The exhibit will be on display until May 25 at the Gold Bug gallery at 22 East Union St., Pasadena.*

DOBLE: Company works for philanthropy through fashion

| continued from page 15 |

reason to support its cause — the company is green.

"I recognized the recent trend of everything going green and I think it is a great way to differentiate myself in the market," Ouyang said.

Doble's website uses environmentally friendly web hosting and the shirts are purchased through American Apparel and Eden Live, businesses based in Africa that hires local people on fair wages.

"I bought the first shirt to help out Kappa Sigma's philanthropy," Bajana said. "But it ended up being a well-fitted and comfortable shirt. Now that I know [about doble's other benefits], how could I refuse to buy more?"

Ouyang hopes to introduce doble to boutiques in Los Angeles soon and will continue to utilize the USC network for

“

I RECOGNIZED THE RECENT TREND OF EVERYTHING GOING GREEN AND I THINK IT IS A GREAT WAY TO DIFFERENTIATE MYSELF IN THE MARKET.”

Jeffrey Ouyang
senior, business administration

the benefit of his business.

Doble's shirts might be comfortable, but Ouyang hopes that the cause is what makes his costumers feel good in their clothes.

"We will make the world a better place one shirt at a time," Ouyang said.

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