

# CAMBRIDGE

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Picture: Martin Bond



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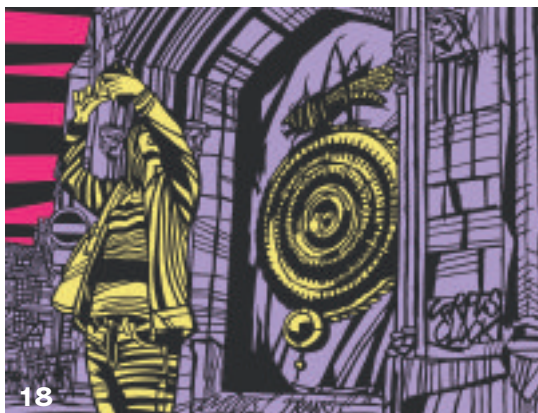
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It takes two (wheels) baby



"The Corpus Clock is one of the newest and most popular public monuments in Cambridge. There is a beautiful simplicity to the contrasts at work in this image. It's a war of opposites – the beautiful woman attempts to freeze time with her photograph, while the grotesque 'time-eater' continually consumes it. As with this image, the clock itself is a mixture of modern and old.

"Three years ago, I discovered Béatrice Coron's amazing paper cuts. I'd never seen anything like it. My first thought was that it'd be impossible for me to have the patience and precision to achieve something so delicate. This thought was soon replaced with 'Why should it be impossible?'. . .

"At this point, I gave myself a 2,000-hour challenge to practice, practice, practice. I stocked up on enough materials to last 2,000 hours (blades, blades and more blades) and just did the work. It took more than a year, but I was happy to see this time as a 'creative' jail sentence.

"In truth, I was sold on paper-cutting in the first hour. I had a new way to create images – one that perfectly combined the stylised accuracy and energy of my pen drawing with the delicacy and fluidity of paper cuts. To discover a new process, as an artist, is like winning the lottery."

## Figure this

"In my earliest memories, I'm sketching in a jotter pad. A landmark moment was at the age of 5 – I won a competition held by the *Liverpool Echo*. The prize money was £1, so I treated myself to a plastic six-shooter and a cowboy hat.

"My winning picture was a drawing of ships sailing at sea and planes flying high in the sky. All done in wonderful black line. Years have passed and the need to be a cowboy has died down a little – but my love of strong line has remained.

"I wanted to explore the more hidden parts of the colleges and this is a perfect example. I'd lived in Cambridge for nearly 20 years before discovering the statues in Trinity College.

"Louis-François Roubiliac's statue of Isaac Newton stands high above the two lovers. The romantic couple are connected by his mobile device, enjoying a moment sharing his favourite love song. Or maybe just watching another forgettable YouTube video that's gone viral for the week."

# A CUT above

Past and present collide to stunning effect in Darin Mount's paper cuts of Cambridge.

Making their debut on these pages, Darin has kept his works under wraps for two years – as he tells Alice Ryan.















## History boy

"This must be one of the most magnificent street views in Cambridge. Two giants, Senate House and Gonville & Caius, seem to nudge the university bookshop out of the frame. There is a David and Goliath element: the low angle of the man casually holding a camera, in place of a slingshot, elevates his status – making him an even match for the grand architectural backdrop.

"I kept my work under wraps because I'd imposed the 2,000-hour rule of working in solitude. And what I've done with the city scenes hasn't been done before; I suppose I wanted to hold my cards close to my chest. It would be like a writer explaining the whole idea behind their novel before it's been written.

"My idea was to introduce a 21st century slant to the images; to not only acknowledge the jaw-dropping beauty of the city, but give the figures a 21st century context. Placing figures directly in a city scene is rare, but in my work they are very much in the forefront.

"They bring an element of the lost and the lonely; a romantic sense of people struggling to connect. For me, it's a wonderful mix that touches on the yesteryear romance of Vetriciano, the detachment of Hopper and the vibrancy of Warhol. And I wanted to hold back on sharing that creative cocktail until the collection was complete."

## Riding by

"As a teenager I discovered Paul Hogarth's New York sketches, which transported me from a rather uneventful St Helens into the heart of a busy Times Square. Absolutely magical.

"That's when I realised the power of drawing places – it can transport you somewhere you've never visited; it inspires, informs, fuels dreams. I saw my job as an artist to be the equivalent of a photographer, but instead of a camera I'd have pen and ink.

"After reading that Paul Hogarth had taught at Cambridge School of Art in the late 50s and early 60s, I stubbornly decided that this would be the only college for me. I left St Helens in my late teens to study illustration at the college and have lived in Cambridge ever since.

"I'm fortunate to live in the centre of Cambridge in the Highset estate on Hills Road. An amazing coincidence is that Paul Hogarth used to live here; if someone told the teenage me that I'd end up living in the same place as my creative superhero, I'd have found it impossible to believe.

"That's why I decided the very first print of my Cambridge series – *The Cyclist, King's College* – should be put on display in Hogarth's old neighbourhood. I gave a print to my good friend Karim, who owns Joy Coffee Bar and Patisserie on Hills Road. If anyone is interested in seeing the work hanging, you should head over there and treat yourself to one of the tastiest baguettes in Cambridge."



## At the gate



"Traditionally dressed in heavy winter coats, dark suits and the classic bowler hat stand the familiar gatekeepers of Trinity College. King Henry VIII can be seen proud above the Great Gate holding a golden orb – but a glimpse of the technological world can still be seen, in the earpieces worn by the porters.

"I was a commercial illustrator for 10 years, but lost my love of drawing; I just felt too pigeon-holed. So I did an MA, going on to teach art for 17 years. When my son left school, the time felt right to take a risk and quit my job.

"Leaving my job was one of the bravest moves I've made – but I knew I had to return to the artistic life I'd originally planned for

myself from the age of 5. I didn't want to career-compromise and regret it later.

"Working as an artist is the opposite to a day in the classroom. The noise has been replaced by silence, peering through a magnifying glass while holding a scalpel. Instead of the bell ringing every 40 minutes, my alarm beeps every 10 minutes to remind me to change the blade.

"To work in solitude and silence is a wonderful experience. I imagine it's similar to meditating for eight hours a day. Something very calming happens when you sit still and focus and stop rushing. This is the process of paper-cutting. It might drive most people crazy, but to me it's heaven."

## See and shop

"The internet is a gift to any creative person: this is an empowering and exciting era for artists," says Darin. "We can promote, network, market and sell our own work with the advantage of dealing directly with the customer. The relationship between artist and buyer has never been stronger.

"I'm very much enjoying imagining myself as a Cambridge Andy Warhol in charge of my own Factory. I'll be launching my work on Etsy and directly through my website to tie in with this article.

"The original paper cuts will be available for purchase and alongside these will be an accompanying series of limited edition giclée colour prints. Each image will have a limited print run of 95.

"The A1 prints will be selling for £90 per print and the original paper cuts will sell for £700 plus framing costs, if required. I also take commissions for bespoke artworks of people and places."

◀ To see more of Darin's work – including paper cuts of London and Liverpool – visit [darinmount.com](http://darinmount.com).

