

# artist profile

Todd Goldman

## 'Stupid Factory' Creator Is 'Post-Pop' Sensation



*You can call Todd Goldman's art controversial, but don't call him, or his art, a fad.*

BY JOE JANCSURAK

ABN Editor

Self-proclaimed professional doodler, cartoon-type illustrator Todd Goldman has, in a very short time, managed to establish himself as a provocative force within the contemporary art market—carving for himself a niche forever known as “post-pop art.”

Goldman's simply drawn, colorful characters are oozing with cutting-edge humor and controversy, depending on your perspective. Only two years ago, his art and irreverence captured the attention and imagination of the S<sup>2</sup> Art Group, Goldman's exclusive art publisher. Shortly after signing on with S<sup>2</sup> in 2004, the Clearwater, FL-based artist had his first exhibition of paintings (acrylics on canvas signed simply “TODD”) in the Entertainment Gallery in the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, where Goldman showed 96 paintings, of which 87 were sold.

Goldman's first exhibition quickly established a pattern of success for subsequent exhibitions, 10 of which were held during his first year as an artist. Some collectors of Goldman's art have been known to acquire as many as five or six at a time, and celebrity collectors include Paul McCartney, Jessica Simpson, John Goodman and the Wayans Brothers (Marlon, Shawn and Keenen Ivory). His first hand-signed lithograph, “Peas on Earth,” was released in 2004 and he has since produced 20 lithographs, with several of these editions being close to sold out.

This year's gallery exhibitions include Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Japan, London and Artexpo New York (S<sup>2</sup> Art Group, Platinum Booth #1840).

### Backwards, But It Works

As for the irreverent cartoon-type characters for which Goldman is well-



▲ Goldman's cerebral side shows through in images such as these, which celebrate the ever-popular double entendre.

known, those had their beginnings in January of 2000, when Goldman founded David & Goliath (named not after Old Testament figures, but after Goldman's dad Dave and his dad's dog Goliath).

“I kinda did this backwards,” says Goldman, referring to his art following the licensed products, rather than vice versa. Goldman has two accounting degrees from the University of Florida, a bachelor's and a master's. He also has his CPA, and actually worked at an Atlanta accounting firm for 10 months before borrowing money from his parents to launch David & Goliath.

Today, David & Goliath (D&G) is a \$100-million-plus licensed-products (girls t-shirts and pajamas, calendars, plush animals, key chains, etc., etc., etc.) enterprise with 12 retail stores (Goldman hopes to have 35 in five years) for Goldman's “Stupid Factory” characters, of which there are about 100—including “Trendy Wendy,” who's been known to proclaim through Goldman's art, “You Say I'm a Bitch, Like It's a Bad Thing” and “Goodbye Kitty,” an or-

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▲ Goldman's irreverent personality shines through in images such as these.

dinary feline shown awaiting its fate outside a Chinese restaurant or in the grasp of the world's most misunderstood giant ape in "Goodbye Kitty Kong."

But the character that has generated the most press and attention for the businessman-turned-artist, is "Todd," the bug-eyed, round-face boy that Goldman created to "make fun of himself" as a boy and whose image adorns artworks and a plethora of related products showing little "Todd" running away from, what else? Rocks.

Goldman's harshest critics, such as Los Angeles-based radio host and newspaper columnist, Glenn Sacks, and Bernard Goldberg, author of the best-seller, *100 People Who Are Screwing Up America* (in which Goldman is ranked 97) have accused the artist, who also has a line of "Boys Are Smelly" products, of furthering what they perceive as today's "boy-bashing" culture.

While Goldman seems to embrace controversy, he considers his critics misguided and "kinda scary," especially when one considers, he says, the negative potential of other pop culture phenomena, such as some video games and "gangsta rap" music.

"These are a lot more violent than images of my boy Todd," says the 37-year-old, single Goldman. "I'm just being silly. It's not about the money; it's about getting my message out there. My sense of humor allows me to express myself."

#### For Thinking People

Goldman's sense of humor isn't always controversial. In fact, some might argue, Goldman included, that many of his images are borderline cerebral.

"I hope to impact society with my art," says Goldman. "I'm trying to get people to think with some

of my images, citing as examples, "One Nightstand," which shows one nightstand; "I Bring Nothing to the Table," which includes an

empty table; and "Peas on Earth," which, of course, shows peas and a globe to illustrate wishes for world peace.

"Not everything I do is controversial," Goldman says.

But everything he creates appears, well, golden.

#### Success Breeds Success

In addition to his success as a painter and entrepreneur, Goldman recently experienced notoriety as a first-time author, with his book, *Boys Are Stupid, Throw Rocks at Them!*, published by Workman Publishing and released last year. There will be a "sequel" to the original *Boys Are Stupid*, but Goldman's next book, which is expected to be released later this year, will be about "a boy and his doodie." That's right, doodie, as in, well, you know.

Goldman also writes his "Stupid Stuff by Todd" column for *Seventeen* magazine. This month's column is "Five Things You Don't Know About Ashlee Simpson" (No. 2 is "Her dad's real name is Homer."). Goldman also answers messages from *Seventeen* readers in "Ask Todd." This month, he answers a 15-year-old reader who wants to know, "What would you do if a monkey stole your peanut butter sandwich?" For Goldman's in-depth and insightful response to this probing question, see this month's *Seventeen*.

Also expected to be released later this year is another Goldman original in the form of an animated TV show to be titled, "The Ugliers." The premise? The show will depict the ugliest family in a community of beautiful people. The punchline? The Ugliers don't know they're ugly.

Get it? If you don't that doesn't bother Goldman—at all.

"I'm not out to make a statement," he says. "I think what I'm doing is funny. And other people do, too, or else my art and my products wouldn't be selling like they are."

Another way of saying it is a quote by the only artist Goldman collects, Dr. Seuss, who once said, "Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

In fact, never mind Warhol and Haring, to whom Goldman is often compared, Goldman wants to be remembered as Dr. Seuss is remembered—"for his imagination and wild characters."

"I take my art seriously," says Goldman. "I don't consider myself a fad." **ABN**

For reprints of this article, call 800-867-9285, ext. 5503.

#### SOURCE

- David and Goliath, [www.davidandgoliathtees.com](http://www.davidandgoliathtees.com)
- S<sup>2</sup> Art Group, Ltd., 312-329-1004, [www.s2art.com](http://www.s2art.com)

▼ Goldman has one book to his credit and more on the way.

