

## Classic Posters - Interview with Stainboy by Paul Grushkin

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Known to the world as "Stainboy," Orlando's Greg Reinel is no mere poster artist -- he's an all-purpose offender. He's an accomplished ink-slinger, now published exclusively by Andy Stern's Diesel Fuel Prints, and (although less frequently now) plays guitar and howls in his two-man band, Nutrajet.

Some say he's "the next Coop." Stainboy, who doesn't idolize rock stars, begs to differ. He's his own man, an entertainer, a stage-meister as adept at pissing people off (and turning them on) with printed media as he is with two fists of Gibson Les Paul guitars. He describes himself as "unschooled, undisciplined, and unstoppable." Yet, he's the consummate professional in preparing his posters for screenprinting. His line work leaves everyone gasping. He's Stainboy, not some cheap imitation.

I spoke with Stainboy over the phone late one night, as he was busy unpacking a delivery from Diesel Fuel of his latest art print, a scorching replication of his own Mach 1 Mustang, complete with his requisite, trademark-like, hot chick.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: You sound like you're huffing and puffing. What's going on?

STAINBOY: Unpacking boxes from Andy at Diesel. Big boxes!

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Well that's a good thing because that means you're selling posters.

STAINBOY: Yes. A new batch of posters ready for sale is always a good thing.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Congratulations.

STAINBOY: Well it means I get a little break, talking to you.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Let me start out by asking you, what's with the Stainboy cover-up?

STAINBOY: It wasn't until two years ago that I started using it as a pen name. It's better than plain ol' Greg Reinel and people will remember it, like a Pushead or a Coop. Plus, I've the signature to match anyone, anywhere. Oddly enough, it's actually the same way

I sign "Reinel." I always sign "Reinel" that way with a big looped "I." I've signed that way since I was a kid. The signature makes the man, don't you know?

PAUL GRUSHKIN: When you were a kid, were you a scribbler?

STAINBOY: No, and I don't fill sketchbooks or folders. I approach my illustrations like I approach music. I don't practice-jam; when it's time to play, I play. When it's time to draw, I draw. I get the idea and I'm off to the races. I'm like that -- impulsive.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Let's say that I've got a gig for you, the Melvins, or Motorhead, and I say, "Stainboy, this is what's happening, this is the club, this is the date, do your thing." Is what's immediately in your mind's eye something that leaps to the front, and that's what you start pursuing?

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*Sevendust by Stainboy*

STAINBOY: Sometimes. Sometimes I've got to think about it, like my Sevendust poster. I've heard poster artists say, "I don't do bands that I don't know." Why take on the job if you don't know the band? Well, it only takes an hour of research. I'm a quick study, and you have to be to get the work. I didn't know much about Sevendust at first, but once I looked at their site and listened to some of their songs, that "How Does it Feel to Be the Enemy" line popped in and I happened to glance at my "Dirty Harry" lobby card against the wall. I went, "oh, ok," and if you look at the Sevendust poster it's based around the whole Dirty Harry movie poster thing. Good choice of material to work from, which made a good rock poster as a result. I'll be honest here: I like the challenge of learning about a band I'm not familiar with, and actually pulling off a design that represents them well.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: In other words, what you're doing is you're carrying a lot of pop culture reference items inside your head at all times. Things that you picked up, like a blotter over the course of a lifetime.

STAINBOY: Yes. One example is, I've always really been into the illustrated movie poster. I like the look. I can't explain it; it just gets me off.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: When you were growing up, did the Reinel's have popular art hanging in their house?

STAINBOY: You mean my parents? Yes, of course, but . . . My dad is a design engineer. Every year he'd be taking on a different project. One year he was designing a chopper trike motorcycle and the next year he'd be doing some optical illusion design piece. He once built a Popular Mechanic's submarine. I wouldn't say my Dad had lots of artistic background, but accurate drawing was necessary for design engineering.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: But what's the difference, if there is a difference, between drawing a car or a lady or physically building something in 3-D. Is there a difference?

STAINBOY: Actually, not much. My Dad could draw well too, but he was always more mechanically inclined, whereas I didn't pick up on that as a kid. I didn't become mechanically inclined until later. The thing I took from him is that if I need a part for something, I'm real good fashioning that part out of what's on hand. Illustration is part engineering, too.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Does your Dad recognize your artistic skill?

STAINBOY: Yes, my parents always supported my music and my graphic art.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: When did you do your first poster, was it in junior high or high school?

STAINBOY: I actually made drawings of the teachers I disliked and made flyers of them, and put them out in the hall. I got called in on that. They brought in my art teacher who really liked me at the time. Funny thing is, being that I drew

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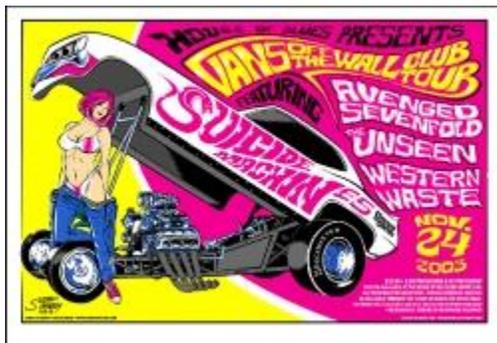
my whole life, I kind of slacked off in art class thinking it was easy and he taught me a lesson: he gave me an 'F' one semester. But there he was, my art teacher in the office and they had all my schoolwork lined up next to these flyers I made and they were trying to compare 'em. My art teacher looked at everything and he said, "Nope, these aren't the same." Whew! But those were my first flyers.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: When did you first start playing in a band?

STAINBOY: Early 1980's.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: So, you were mainly influenced by punk?

STAINBOY: Not just punk, all sorts of stuff. '60s garage rock, rockabilly, '70s classics, Sex Pistols. Cheap Trick. Whatever I thought was cool. I figured playing guitar would be easy and it did come easy. Being in a band was just as natural as picking up a pen. But I think access to the Internet has changed the dynamic of forming bands. People aren't in it for the long haul. They're in, they're out. Maybe there have always been a hundred thousand bands, but until the Internet, we never really were so aware of them. How can you keep track of it all? And is everyone making good music?



*Suicide Machines by Stainboy*

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Now the Internet allows a poster artist to fall in love with a new band and make a poster for an event sometimes thousands of miles away from where he's living.

STAINBOY: Right. I like that aspect, but it also does allow people to polish turds.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Of course.

STAINBOY: Like me. (laughs). Well, hopefully not. I'm putting a lot of work into making everything as good as I can make it. A lot of people are making rock posters these days, so I'd better be good! Just look at each Flatstock; more new artists every time.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Andy Stern told me he discovered you at the third Flatstock, in Seattle. That's when you drove out there, all the way from Orlando, right?

STAINBOY: Yes, and I plan on driving to the next one in Seattle too. Andy came up to me and said, "Is there anybody publishing you?" I said no. He goes, "I am." It was as simple as that.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: What did you know about him at that point? Probably very little.

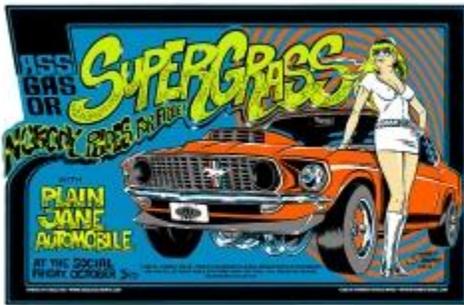
STAINBOY: No. Actually I remember trying to get some stickers printed for Nutrajet, and I think we contacted him. Later his website came up as a banner on gigposters.com, when he started working the 'Suicide Girls' thing. Then, I remembered the name. I was familiar that he was doing stickers for a lot of different bands. I just didn't know he was doing posters.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Now there is some difference between the two, between printing stickers and printing posters -- not to mention fine art prints. Why did you go with Andy?

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STAINBOY: I'd been doing stuff for a long, long time....you've seen my black and white stuff, and you put some in the ART OF MODERN ROCK book. I just never had been screen printed. I was kind of giddy-like, "Wow, I'm finally going to get some of my work silk screened." And then, after he did my first Supergrass poster, and when I got my copies, I was like, whoa. The man is seriously committed to excellence.



*Supergrass by Stainboy*

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Like you, his shop works very comfortably -- and confidently -- in large format.

STAINBOY: Right. It's one of those happy accidents. He's a great guy, easy to get along with. We've got a good deal going; we're fair with each other. Just like all good things, it happened suddenly and for no special reason. You can't plan for things like that.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Well, I think something important happened between the two of you with this Mach 1 Mustang poster.

STAINBOY: Yes, I'm going to do a bunch of those this year if I can get the time. It's new; it's a good new direction. I'm not complaining.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Andy wouldn't be doing them unless you both thought there was a market, so if I'm correct, the

idea is to interest car owners just like you, all across the US?

STAINBOY: Yes, my idea is rooted in the fact there are a lot of new-style gear-heads out there. I don't really belong to any particular car club, but I'll go hang with them at cruises. I'm sort of a weird car guy, in that I love the later muscle cars, but I'm not one of those anal types who can take everything apart and swap engines. I just like the cars. I like the look. I like the attitude. Besides which, there's just a lot of bad auto art out there. I'm talking about art prints which have the Marilyn Monroe diner from the '50s with a '60s car parked in front. Not right! And the Rat Fink hot rod thing has been done to death and even though I love that, there's got to be a place for a new kind of semi-photo-realistic styled art with a modern, updated, screen-printed, money feel, and that's what I'm pioneering. The term for it is 'affordable auto art'.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Right on.

STAINBOY: Lately, I've been thinking about this a lot. This could be a very cool series, if it's based on the more modern muscle cars and some of the more obscure older ones that have character and personality. People who own these cars absolutely feast on 'em. From what I can tell, they're starving for art that plays into what they love. Since I drive a Mach 1 Mustang myself, I know I'm all hungry for merchandise like that. So when I put some feelers out, like how about I take on this project, people were all for it. "Yeah do it, I'd buy one," that's what I heard. So I put my hand to it.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Is it harder to draw a car than a beautiful woman?

STAINBOY: No, they're the same thing.

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PAUL GRUSHKIN: You just have to understand the curves and the angles?

STAINBOY: Same thing man, same thing -- even the car designers would tell you that.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Do you draw from a photo or do you have a picture already in your mind's eye?

STAINBOY: Well some cars I know are like women I know; they're permanently imprinted on your brain. You work with what's familiar, and what gets you off. My high school art classes first got me into figure drawing. I liked the process and the result. It came easy to me -- which is not to say I had great technical skill right from the beginning. It's just . . . I can sit down and the idea takes shape. I guess they call that talent. Sometimes I don't need reference material; sometimes the idea needs some more complex thinking-through. I'm not scared of reference material, but I don't want to be dependent on it. Some of my earlier black and white stuff had no references per se, because I was too poor to purchase anything to use (like magazines), so I'd just do it from memory. But, when you're dealing with cars, you'd like to be accurate. I've got a lot of 1/18 scale models, or if I know of somebody who has the car I'll go take pictures. With the Mach I Mustang, it's out in my garage, so you could say that was nice and convenient.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Describe your process. Do you begin with several roughs and approaches? Or is it basically one rough and a particular direction which turns into a more fine rough, and sets up the inking?

STAINBOY: The artist Olivia and I work the same way. I don't draw on paper. I draw on see-through tracing paper. I run

with a particular idea and draw it out on that tracing paper and I lay another piece over it and make changes and trace that, and finally when I have what I want, I just flip it over and trace that so I've got it on each side. Then I lay it on illustration board and I'll rub it onto the board. The reason that I rub it on there is so it's real light, it doesn't make any indentations, and the brush can flow smooth over the board.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: You've expressed great affection for the brush. How does the brush enhance your art?

STAINBOY: I haven't been using it as long as people think. I've only been using it the last three or four years. My older stuff looks brushed... see I was stupid, for someone who's been drawing all his life I never knew how professional illustrators worked. I thought those guys were making brush lines with a pen. Everybody's like, "Greg, your brush work is really good," and I just didn't say anything. Then when I started hearing guys like Coop saying they threw away their pens and starting going with a brush, I thought, aha, that must be the way to do it. And so I did.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: How many pieces are you cranking out a month at this point?

STAINBOY: Usually two or three, but I want to keep it at one or two, so I can keep the quality in it.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Has it turned into your day job?

STAINBOY: Oh yes it has. I make my living at it. I get orders from Europe and the UK all the time now. Dealers everywhere are buying my stuff. And now Andy's website is taking in consistent business.

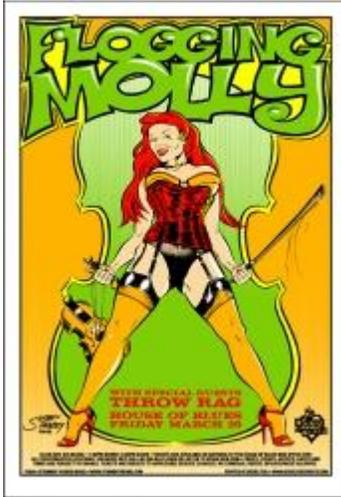
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PAUL GRUSHKIN: The thing with posters -- well, art prints, really -- is to get into stronger income-earning price points. That can be done with larger-format pieces, which in your case would seem ideal, since you already "think big" as an illustrator.

STAINBOY: I'm actually drawing them bigger than the posters turn out to be!

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Really?



*Flogging Molly by Stainboy*

STAINBOY: When I posted that news, some guy said "it seems you're making a lot of trouble for yourself if you're doing them on separate boards." Sometimes I have to cut the drawings in half to take them to the next step. Time was when I would lay on the floor doing illustrations, because it gave me unlimited space, but that kills my back. So I work at a proper table now, but in the way I draw in large format, even spinning the board around for proper angles is a pain in the ass.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Why do you draw so big Greg?

STAINBOY: Because I've always drawn big and I'm used to it. But also, when you're brushing it's really nice to get a

big load of ink and let the brush freely dictate within the space. You get good line work that way because you have a lot of room in which to move. You're not constricted. If you're trying to move in a small space, it isn't quite the same. When you've given yourself enough space, you can get real nice long lines, nice types of thin to thick lines. There are a lot of benefits to doing it my way. Plus, I have to say, it's nice to have this really big original artwork afterwards, to sell to a collector. But the real point of using brushes and pens is by the end of the task you feel like you've accomplished something - something tangible - not just vector files on a computer.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Who would you say are among your influences?

STAINBOY: Lindsey Kuhn, number one. And, obviously, Frank Kozik. Their posters were the first posters that I saw that made me think, "who the fuck are these guys?"

PAUL GRUSHKIN: I'd have thought you'd single out only illustrators.

STAINBOY: There are a lot of people whose work I like. Emek, for one. I illustrate because I can and it's what I like best of all. If you look, there's a lot of stuff where I do cut and paste too. Professionalism is what counts, and being all brash about your work. That's Lindsey, and Frank, and Emek. That's what I like about them. As a gigposter artist, my job is to represent the bands, get bodies in the door, and put my own flash across in the process. If the way I've said it visually counts for something, then there was a reason for me to put my name at the bottom.

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PAUL GRUSHKIN: So was Nashville Pussy cool with the black chick and the comb?

!P CP701675 "Nashville Pussy by Stainboy"

STAINBOY: Nashville Pussy will tell you that's the best Nashville Pussy poster ever made. I was proud to hear them say that. I love that band; they're great. One of the best rock bands around. They saw my stuff at Flatstock and requested I do a poster. I was watching Coffy one night and thinking, "Nashville Pussy, they always have this southern redneck stuff associated with them, right? So, I'm going to do Pam Greer!!"

So I did this bad-ass black chick, and I drew her with her legs spread and I knew it was going to say Nashville on her one leg and then Pussy on the other. The thought of where to place the pick came at the end, and it was a great flash, like, "I've got to put the black power pick right there, right in the middle, right there above the pussy." And I did. It sold like hot cakes. In fact, I think that is my best poster.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Well your World War II bomber Motorhead poster was a pretty great idea too.

STAINBOY: Thanks, but you know what's funny about that Nashville Pussy poster? I thought absolutely nobody would let me post that thing, but when I went around town everybody let me put it up.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: No kidding?

STAINBOY: No kidding. It was in every shop in Orlando. There was one punk store I went into, and I immediately saw this mom and her two daughters and I thought oh-oh, here we go, not cool, but they just looked up at it after I'd posted it

and they went, "that is so great." So apparently times are changing.

PAUL GRUSHKIIN: Not to mention peoples' new found appreciation for screen prints.

STAINBOY: Screenprints are very cool one-of-a-kinds. That's what people are discovering. It's not an exact process, screenprinting. Every poster in the run is different, and that's what it's all about. That's what makes it great. I mean if you want utter perfection with no spots or smears, then go get a digital print made. But those digital prints have no soul! What's fun for me is going through the production stack and seeing all the little differences. Since Andy's shop is in Portland, obviously I can't be there to oversee the run but when I get my stack here in Orlando, I go through the same process every time -- I look at every print individually. I know it's boring at times and it's a lot of work, but believe it or not, I spend hours looking at the entire set. I pick out what I think are the best ones, not necessarily for the quality (because all of them are quality prints), but what I'm trying to do is find the ones that look right. It's a completely personal thing.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Andy told me something interesting. He said you're the one artist he can trust to give finished art to his production staff without requiring much of his own involvement, and, although he's very aware when it's running, he doesn't have to hover over the press. Has he told you that?

STAINBOY: Yes. It was like several prints in, and I was explaining that, by the way I'd made a mask or something to handle a technical matter (I bounce back between Photoshop and Illustrator

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because what I'm doing is basically like cutting rubylith only I'm doing it with .Tiff files in Photoshop and it will automatically update in Illustrator. It's kind of complicated, but it's easy for me), and I was telling him this in some detail when he said, "Greg, I don't look even look at your stuff anymore, it's that together." So when he said that, it kind of frightened me, so now I like quadruple check everything, so he shouldn't have to worry about checking it.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Do you send him a finished disk or is it all done electronically?

STAINBOY: Actually I just upload it all to his site.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: FTP it up there.

CP051002 " Supergrass by Stainboy"

STAINBOY: I started out with sending him disks, then got set up with the FTP thing. Which makes it really comfortable. He's in Portland; I'm in Florida, and there's no fuss.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: What kind of equipment do you work with?

STAINBOY: My little I-Mac. It was the first machine you could switch between operating systems 9 and 10. I work in 9, because it's simple and I can make adjustments there. I'll roam the net on 10, but I'll do my work on 9 because all of my stuff is there. The hard part is scanning my boards on a standard size flatbed scanner.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: You've probably got to do four or six scans since your original art is created on such a large scale.

STAINBOY: Four and six is a good day! The drag racing girl (the Suicide

Machines gigposter) was 16 different scans because of the way the funny car's top opened. But you do whatever you have to do, pre-production-wise; if you want to work in large format, you've got to commit to cutting it up.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: That piece is one of my personal favorites. It just feels right.

STAINBOY: I grew up around drag racing.

PAUL GRUSHKIN: Were you an old-timey slingshot dragster fan or more of a funny car guy?

STAINBOY: All of it. My dad was a loose acquaintance of Don Garlits, so we would get into the pits at the Florida drags. Suicide Machines -- thinking of what to do on that poster, drag racing popped right into my head. I was like, "that's close enough for this band, a funny car is a suicide machine." I had the idea right off and so it was easy.



*MC5 by Stainboy*

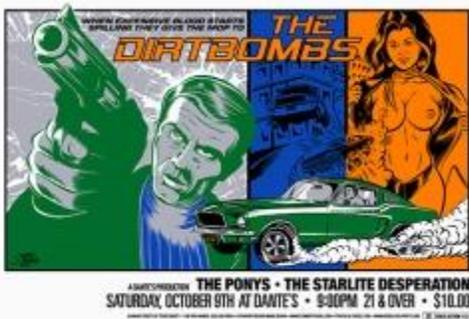
PAUL GRUSHKIN: So what comes next? Are you going to do an AMX as the next car art print?

STAINBOY: Either that or a Mercury Cyclone. I just know I'm going to be doing a lot of stuff this year. Nothing

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complicated. I ain't that witty. I really want rock posters to be my main thing. I know a lot of people see them as stepping stones to something bigger, but to me they're still the thing. I hear artists say chicks and hot rods are so done; well, to some artists maybe, but I still meet people every day for whom that stuff is still new. I meet people all the time who -- incredibly -- have yet to discover Ed Roth's Rat Fink or a big breasted cartoon woman like what I do. That stuff is always new to somebody. That's the reason why it's popular culture. There's always the next kid coming up to me at a show, and the first thing he does after staring at the chick is run his hand over one of my screenprints, and he immediately understands it's different. My second favorite part is to get in my car -- I've got my postering route down solid -- and go around making sure that my posters get put up. It's fun, because while I'm putting them up a little crowd gathers and they're just staring at this thing just like it's a big statue of Christ or they're seeing the Virgin Mary for the first time. I mean that's the effect my posters have. I know it and they know it. It's the real pay-off.



*Dirtbombs by Stainboy*