

# Artist Candace Sepulis is a powerhouse of creativity

## HALIFAX / Halifax-based illustrator's work is vibrant, clean and playful

Shannon Webb-Campbell / National / Friday, February 20, 2009

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Art is life. Whether it is communicated through language, images or sound, the essence of creativity is found in the every day — subtle exchanges, gestures and conversation. Halifax-based illustrator and designer Candace "Jimmie" Sepulis believes art is a universal means of communication.

"Art is an expression and reflection of self," says Sepulis, over afternoon coffee at Java Blend. "To some degree each work generates an understanding of who I am, which at times when I feel clumsy with words or feeling quiet, the drawings speak for me."

At first glance Sepulis' work is vibrant, clean and playful. Perhaps you've seen it on the flagpoles of Guelph, Ontario, the album artwork of Tanya Davis' *Gorgeous Morning* or Tiiu's *Shooting Stars*, even on the covers of *Writer's Gym* by Eliza Clark and Chris Mizzoni's children's book *Clancy With The Puck*.

Look closer and the hushed narrative of all things left unsaid can be heard. Sepulis' work is introverted by nature. The depiction of longing, heartache, love and loss is found throughout her creations. It is in the subtleties and details where an undergrowth of emotive layers surfaces. For Sepulis the creative process is a form of catharsis, a means to convey her romanticism, heartbreak and hopefulness.

"I'm pretty fascinated by love and bonds of attraction between people," she says. "A girl can walk into a room, the same room you've seen her walk into a dozen times before, and suddenly it hits you. Chemistry is such an interesting thing too because you can't really explain it."

"When I create a piece and if it is about a particular person, it's sometimes as though I'm talking to them, showing them how I feel. It's almost like chemistry and attraction is this unspoken language. When vocalized it can ruin friendships, but when it's there and you can see it in her eyes its existence is undeniable."

Originally hailing from Toronto, Sepulis arrived in Halifax last year by way of Guelph. She approaches art and her sense of self in the world with ambiguity. Call her Jimmie, call her Candace. The only label she seems comfortable with is artist, a resource of creativity.

With the rise in popularity of the graphic novel and illustration, the effective means of visual communication is undeniable. Emotion is unspoken, yet it is through the nuances of colour and composition that reflect a particular person or situation. For Sepulis it's a way "to communicate without communicating."

What is that inspires her to create?

"Girls," she says.

"I would say chemistry and attraction are not always a case of needing to kiss someone or needing to be their next girlfriend. Sometimes it's the idea of wanting to get to know someone better and figuring out why you have the attraction — in a metaphysical way, feeling a sense that they're meant to influence your life in some way.

"Sometimes an illustration can be depicting that frustration of wanting to spend time with someone who doesn't seem to care."

Sepulis is a powerhouse of creativity. She may draw from her heart, but she also has worn many hats, including creating a world-renowned short film *'Till Death Do Us Part*, organizing art workshops and hosting a radio show. She completed her undergrad in philosophy, and she's now studying architecture at Dalhousie University.

For more on Sepulis visit [candacesepulis.com](http://candacesepulis.com).

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*FROM THE HEART. "When I create a piece and if it is about a particular person, it's sometimes as though I'm talking to them, showing them how I feel," says artist Candace Sepulis.*

*(Shannon Webb-Campbell photo)*