



Roy Tompkins

Artist's name: Roy Tompkins

Style: Unusual, surreal, gross, and unsettling
Continuing themes: Death, mutilation, drugs, sick and twisted situations
Publications include: Blotter, Harvey the Hillbilly Bastard, Insect Collection, Self-Acceptance, Fruit of the Tomb, Rotgut, Abatis, The Greedy Eye

How long have you been a cartoonist?

Well, I've been drawing since I was a tiny brat. My earliest recollections are drawing. My sister and I used to sit around and draw twisted imitations of Playboy when we were like six years old and staple 'em and freak out people. We did one series of 'em called Rags where these gals would get acid tossed on 'em by a mad scientist, and their clothing turned to rags and fell off. Finally the acid would eat 'em up to bones. And we were really six or seven years old then is all.

What artists or strips have influenced you?

My favorites as a kid were Chester Gould, Harold Gray, V. T. Hamlin, John Severin, and all the early Mad and EC guys. Also read comics like Crazy and Obsession. My favorites now are not much different. I still love those guys. Plus sixties vets like Crumb, Williams, Deitch, etc. help you get motivated. In the early eighties when Weirido and Raw first came along it was a real jolt. I had pretty much given up on comics by then because high school sucked and not another person in my shitty little small town school was into them. So I gradually phased out too. Then I left home and got in Austin in '81. I was, at the time, drawing these really silly personal stories about my friends and circulating them. Then I saw Weirido and Raw and I said 'this shit is great' and 'people are doing intelligent and interesting work', so I decided then (about '82) I was gonna do that.

What motivates you?

To this day I guess the thing that motivates me is seeing other people's good work.

Are there any messages you're trying to get across through your strips?

People are going to have to decide that for themselves.

What are some of your other occupations and/or hobbies?

I try to work part-time programming computers. I'm good at it, but it's a drag. I'd much rather be at the drawing board. Unfortunately, cartoonists don't get paid jack shit. I also like underground music and films. I read a lot, lately Charles Bukowski, Ian McEwan, William Burroughs, Jr., Philip Roth, and Heinrich Boll.

You seem to be obsessed by gross and vulgar things. Why?

That's just how I see life. I don't see how anyone can not see all the gross and vulgar shit everywhere. It also commands attention. I really like to write, and it's like bait. They get sucked in by the weird shit, but there's also a good story or writing there. The combination seems to work for me. Pure gross rarely succeeds by itself, but coupled with good writing, it comes out incredible. Plus, it's more fun to draw.

What are some of your favorite characters and/or strips that you've done?

Harvey the Hillbilly Bastard seems to be my thing to do right now. I can write stories for him pretty effortlessly. Well, not really. Stories are always a ton of work. But the end result is more real. Also, I want to do more with the Fast Food Worm. I also really like doing stories from a first person perspective.

In your opinion, what is wrong with the world?

Murder is only legal for a select few: doctors and politicians. Make it legal so we can kill all of them off.

What projects are you currently working on?

I'm trying to put together a "real" comic book of stories to try and get a "real" publisher to take on as a series (like Kitchen Sink or Fantagraphics or something). Or maybe I'll do it myself. I also want to continue with my Fruit of the Tomb Newsletter. Number 3 is about ready.

What are your goals in your work? What do you hope to accomplish?

I want to get out to a bigger audience and hopefully be able to make my living doing art. Fuck, I don't know.