

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Ree Treweek

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

3 Jan 2018

This week, we go behind the selfie with Ree Treweek, director at female-led animation studio Tulips and Chimneys, formerly Shy the Sun, celebrating their 10-year creative partnership this year.



Treweek in The Household...

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live halfway between the flower market and the Company Gardens in Adderley Street, Cape Town. Our studio is just across the square so I get to live, work and play all in the same neighbourhood when I'm not living inside my head.

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

Being able to imagine multiple worlds inhabited by hybrid characters.

### 3. Describe your career so far.

I am the cofounder of the concept and animation studio Tulips and Chimneys and work in a variety of mediums, ranging from animation to sculpture and illustration.

My career formally began in 2006 when I created a short film with some friends called *The Tale of How*. Like all origin stories, we started in our bedrooms while surviving on peanuts. Much to our surprise, it ended up winning competitions on the international film circuit for the next two years, including best short film at the Annecy Animated Film Festival, which is akin to the Oscars of animation.

Shortly afterwards we were commissioned by United Airlines to create an animated commercial for them in the same style. This was this an amazing project and our first-ever commission. Knowing the scale of this project meant we had to find a top-notch producer.



Cape Town International Animation Festival opens in March with Oscar nominee film

3 Feb 2017



This is how we met Nina Pfeiffer, who I have been lucky enough to be business partners with ever since. Not only is she one of the best producers in the business, she is also incredibly creative, with a sharp eye for detail. Nothing slips by her, which is a big reason the quality of our projects is so high.



#OrchidsandOnions: Don't take this ad with a pinch of salt...

Brendan Seery 22 Aug 2017



Since then, we have been creating animated content and illustrations for all sorts of brands and are steadily developing personal projects, which we can't wait to bring to life on the big screen.

#### 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

My current favourite thing is the private museum I am busy setting up in my apartment. This has been a project that I've been slowly working on for years and is starting to really come together.

The museum depicts an imaginary civilisation born out of my collaboration with writer and musician Markus Wormstorm. This imagery civilisation inhabits a universe called The Household, and so it's rather fitting that the museum is my house, filled with sculptures and paintings that depict this imaginary realm. I love working and collaborating with different artists. Just as all my animation work is a result of collaboration so is my sculptural work. This process allows for surprises as well as using skills and techniques that I am unable to do on my own.

We've been throwing private dinner parties themed to the world (It certainly helps that many of the inhabitants of the household are made up of fruits or vegetables that enjoy a good gin and war over honey)!

In the future, I am hoping to add an animated component to this experience, by introducing an AR tour of the house and its inhabitants. As a kid, I always wanted to be an explorer and this allows me to be one, travelling to exotic places upon an adventure or a quest of sorts.

Other favourite things are choosing flowers from the flower market in Adderley Street, Monday night drawing nights with my friends, whiskey, my mother's ceramics, travelling and spending time on the farm I grew up on.

#### 5. What do you love about your industry?

The people that I work with! To be specific, the lovely folk in our studio, who have all become my closest friends and are among the most talented and inspiring people I know.

#### 6. What are a few pain points your industry can improve on?

In terms of the commercial industry, I feel the pitching process needs to be looked at. Pitches are highly competitive and at times, seven or more directors are pitching on a project.



Thanks for your hard work, now please go away

Sylvia Schutte 31 May 2017



To pitch on a project, we need to develop storyboard and concept art for both the characters and environments, as well as a style frame and at times an animation test.



## The new universal rules for commercial production engagement

Bobby Amm, CPA 14 Jul 2017



This is all done out of pocket and generally takes a team anything from a week to two weeks, which can be very dispiriting if nothing comes through.

### 7. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

It changes a fair bit, depending on what project we are working on, and which part of the process we are in. Generally, I stay in bed until the last possible minute and then rush to the office trying to get there earlier than the rest of the gang. I always enjoy the quiet of the studio to prepare for the day. I grab a coffee en route and the day flies past. My ideal workday happens when I'm developing the initial ideas for a project. Whether it's a commercial or personal project, these ideas generally begin as simple line drawings.

When I begin a drawing or a character, I never really know what's going to appear on the paper. They always rather surprise me as they come into existence. Sometimes, when looking back at old drawings I have no memory of creating them. It's usually only after a character appears on paper that I begin to attribute some personality or history to him.

I then pass that design onto the artists that I collaborate with and they are then fleshed out with added detail and textures. A large part of my workday is spent admiring the skills of the artists around me; everyone is unbelievably talented in very different ways. Our skill as a studio is working out how these different talents can be combined on a project in such a way that everyone enjoys doing what they do best and their skills are best utilised for the project. Managing the workflow of elements as they are passed on from artist to artist consumes a big part of my day. Generally, someone opens up a bottle of wine just before the studio closes and then it becomes harder to leave.

### 8. What are the tools of your trade?

Fine black pens, my scanner, sketchbook, Photoshop and Wacom Cintiq.

### 9. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Current artists that I admire are Linsey Levendall, Marc Moynihan, Faith47, the Grrrl, Liqen, Ben Winfield, Caroline Vos and my brother Rick Treweek.



## Creative directions and evolutions with The Grrrl

Ruth Cooper 6 Jul 2012



It's hard to define what "getting it right" means but in terms of passion, skill, perseverance and sticking to their own guns these guys have it right.

### 10. What are you working on right now?

A new campaign for a gin brand and a 1,000-piece puzzle in the studio made up of one of our recent illustrations. I am also finishing up the illustrations of a new book that will be accompanied by the poetry of Markus Wormstorm. [Click here](#) to follow the project as it unfolds.

**11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.**

VR. AR.

**12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?**

When I'm by myself, drawing without a purpose and don't feel paralysed by time constraints.

**13. What's your secret talent/party trick?**

Guessing surprises.

**14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?**

Technophobe that admires technophiles.

**15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?**

Images from my sketchbook, sculptures and travels.

**16. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?**

The best thing I did was create a personal project that showcased by talents in a manner I would want to work in the future. I'm not sure if I ever would have got to work on the types of projects that we've done over the past 10 years if it hadn't been for the first personal film.

*Simple as that. Click through to Treweek's [MyBiz profile](#) or the [Tulips and Chimneys](#) and [Black Heart Gang](#) websites as well as the following Instagram accounts for the latest updates: [Tulips and Chimneys](#) | [Postcards of Motilia](#) | [Ree Treweek](#)*

*\*Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).*

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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