AS SEEN ON TV

A collection of original art
made using a Sega Mega Drive

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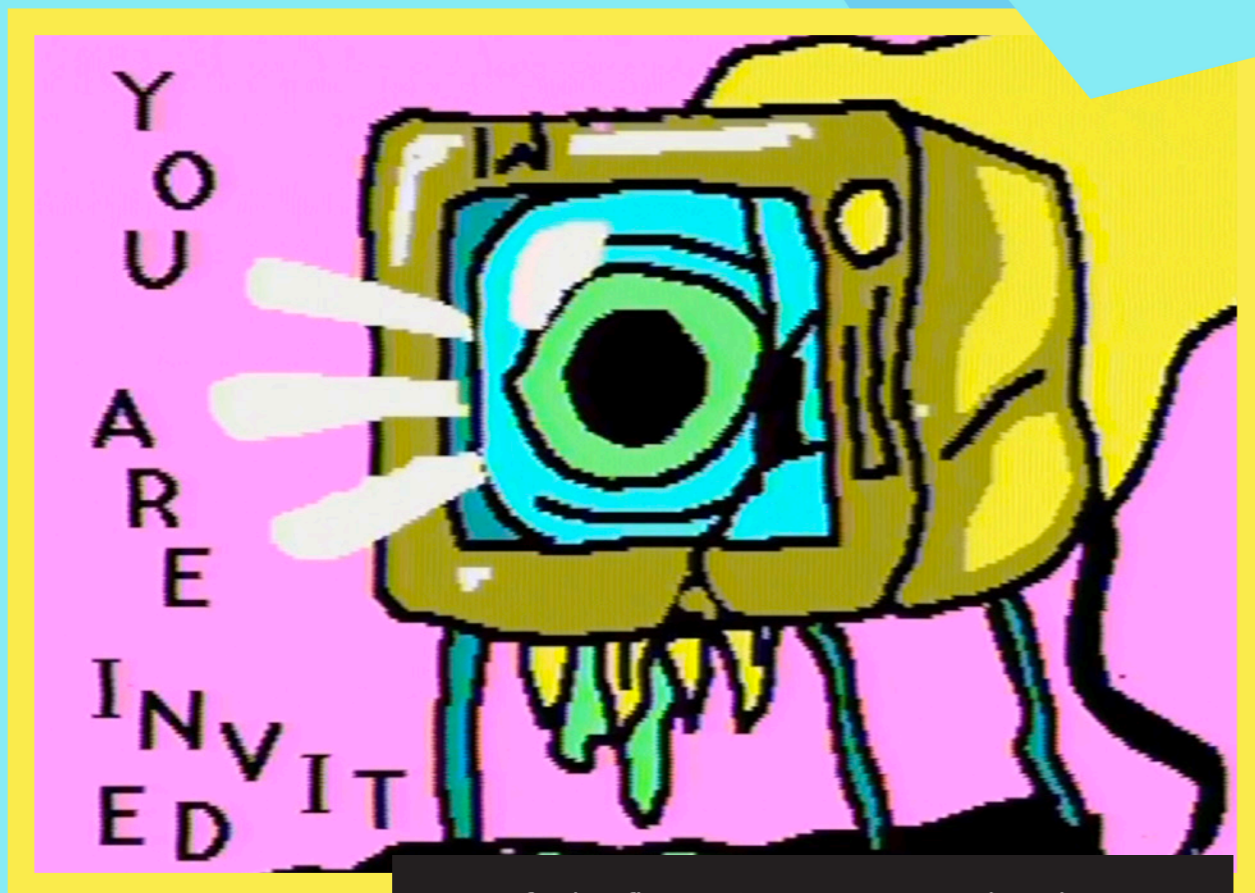
One of the first pieces I created and recorded in *Art Alive!*, Birthday Invite

What the hell is this?

I liked calling this project my own version of torture, moving a cursor slowly around a screen with a Sega Control Pad, spending hours drawing lines in software that's truly obsolete.

Sega's *Art Alive!* has a lot of limitations. 16 colours, a control pad for input and no way to save your work, but I wanted to create something beautiful. Made using a Sega Mega Drive, a control pad and a copy of *Art Alive!*, I recorded the screen to capture the process knowing the original drawing would be lost as I turned the system off.

What is Art Alive!

Produced in 1991 for the Sega Mega Drive (Sega Genesis in the United States), *Art Alive!* is a program that lets you create your own artwork on the system.

Art Alive! is limited by the hardware only allowing you to use a palette of 16 colours, there's no layers, no pen-tool for creating bezier lines and it only supports the Sega Control Pad. There's no support for additional accessories, such as the Sega Mouse (which was released in 1993).

The artwork cannot be saved either. The instruction manual recommends using a VCR to record your work.

This limitation in particular meant that each artwork I produced was done alla prima (completed in one session) and took about an hour. Once you turn off the system, the piece is deleted.

Art Alive! comes bundled with a selection of templates so you can start painting straight away as well as a range of stickers you can paste into your scenes. There's also an animation tool that lets you draw frame-by-frame or paint on an existing animation.

The software was developed by Jay Obernolte from Farsight Technologies and Chris Ziomkowski. The game credits state it was developed by Western Technologies.

A spiritual successor, *Wacky Worlds*, was developed in 1994 by Head Games with more resources. Instead of focusing on a painting tool, *Wacky Worlds* embraced the ability to place stickers to create scenes.

Tiny Fly Guy

Drawn in by a can, the tiny fly vomits all over the top to suck up the few drops of soda left. I wanted to develop a few characters while using Sega's *Art Alive!* that were bold and vibrant. Pieces that work well with the limitations of the software. Fly's are drawn in by things that are gross and rotten, leaving their tiny marks in so many small ways. Just imagine being so happy to find trash everywhere.

Beheaded
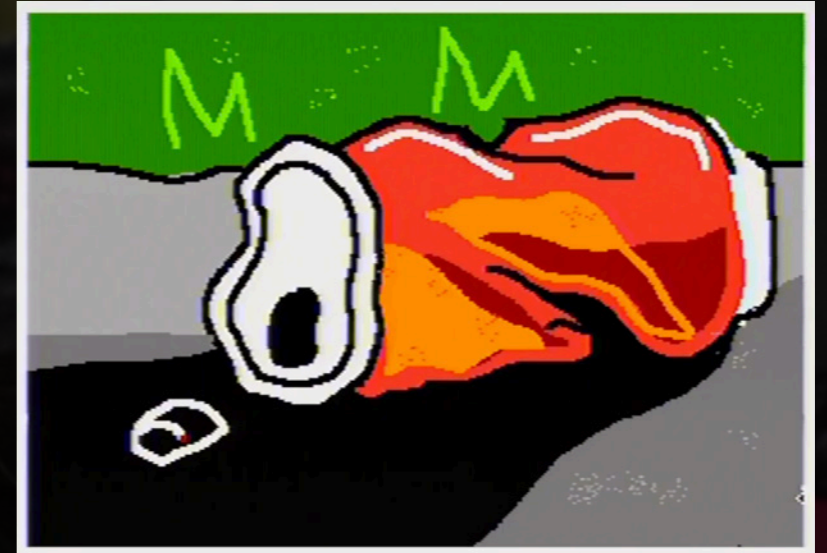
I love thinking about the little battles all the small things around face everyday. With the pull tab separated, this can has been beheaded. Discarded, mangled, emptied and exposed. For me, this can is a reminder that we don't always see the struggle around us.

In the original piece, drawn in Adobe Fresco, the rim of the can was highlighted to create a halo effect.

I called this collection of images *As Seen on TV* because once you turn the console off, the original is lost forever. There's no way to save the originals of these pieces. There's no storage on the cartridge and there's no export options in the software.

By using screencapture software I was able to save copies of the artwork and record how it was created. I also took photos of each piece once they were done to capture how they appeared in their original form on an old CRT television.
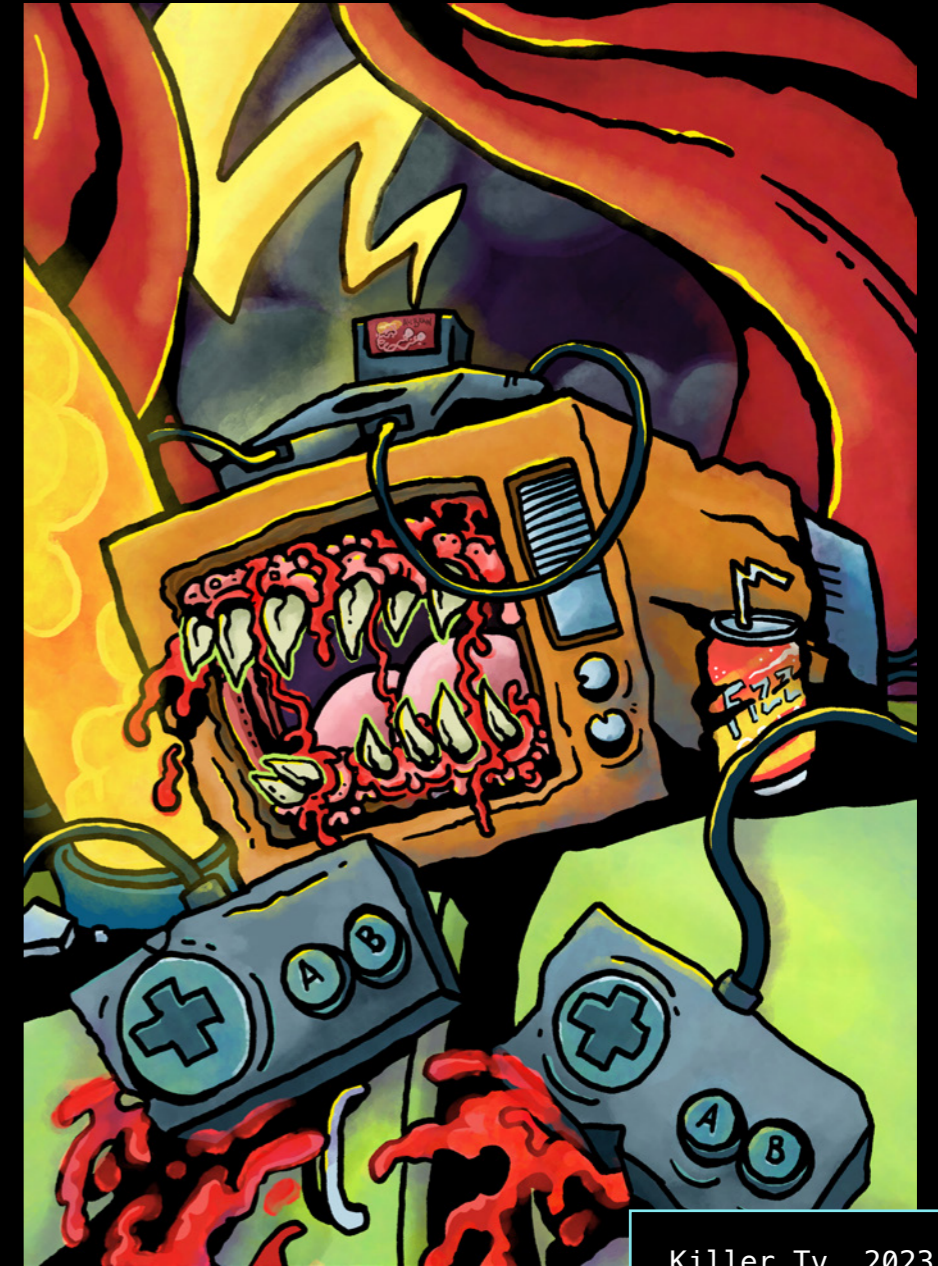
Killer TV

A bolt of lightning struck the television giving it a supernatural desire to destroy. The controllers in the foreground are the focal point that captures the moment of violence with the menacing screen gnashing behind.

Killer TV is a more energetic piece with lines creating movement. Giving the television more depth and centering the square screen allows the chaos to unfold around it. Using *Art Alive!* I really wanted to capture and celebrate the wobbly lines and mistakes introduced by a human.
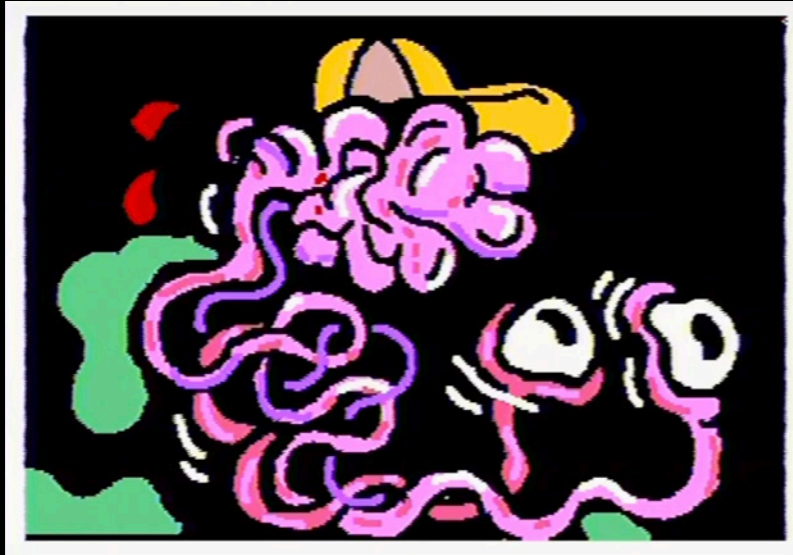
Killer TV was originally drawn in Adobe Fresco using an iPad, capturing the details of the chaotic scene. Without having space for the lightning, I used a green energy to explain the transformation.

Killer Tv, 2023

All Brains

Exposed and vulnerable, usually our brains sit tight within our heads where our thoughts and feelings can be safe. All Brains is loose and messy, barely held together and functioning but taking in everything around it.

Drawing fine lines in Art Alive! Can be challenging, and I wanted to use this piece to challenge myself and what I could achieve in the software. The green ooze helps frame the artwork and create a beautiful contrast within the limited colour palette.
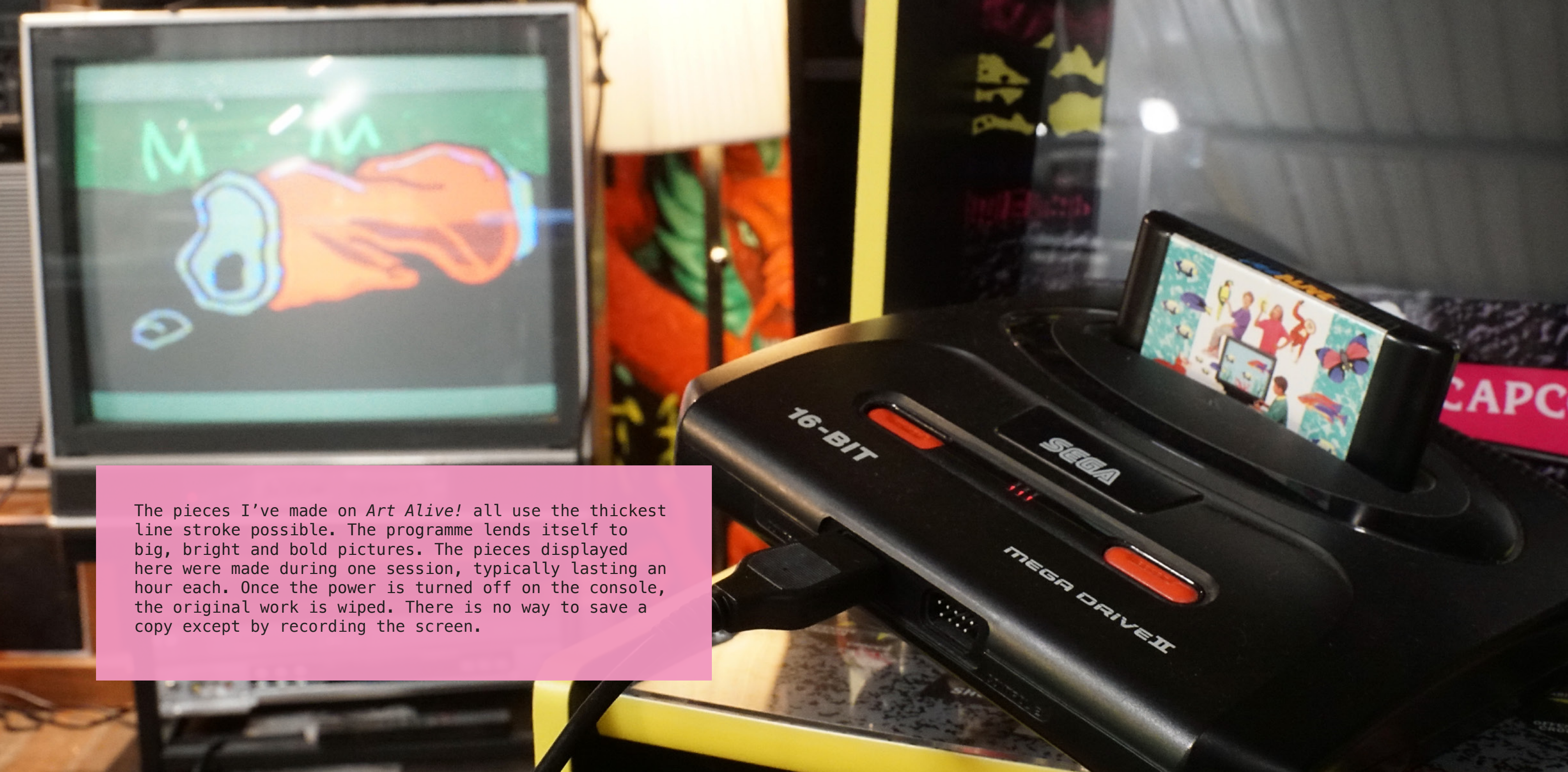
All Brains, 2023

Prawn Party

This hypercolour prawn knows how to party.
I was fascinated by how a few simple strokes
could help build a character. Party Prawn is
fun with a dash of Australian personality.

When COVID-19 started ruining plans all
throughout 2020, I wanted to create something
special for friends and family at Christmas.
Prawns are often served during Christmas in
Australia so I made a series of magnets with
these funky prawns having a party. It was
a chance to acknowledge the parties and get
togethers we missed during 2020. Because the
magnets were on a solid black background, the
magnets could be arranged any way you wanted.
Together or alone.

A lot of my recording sessions went into early
hours of the morning, including Prawn Party.
The picture on the old CRT televisions nearly
felt like it was glowing. To try and capture the
original pieces better, I photographed the TV set
after every session.

The pieces I've made on *Art Alive!* all use the thickest line stroke possible. The programme lends itself to big, bright and bold pictures. The pieces displayed here were made during one session, typically lasting an hour each. Once the power is turned off on the console, the original work is wiped. There is no way to save a copy except by recording the screen.

Breakfast

The most important meal of the day spread across an open plain.
I appreciate the variety of textures found in food. It can be
gross, exciting or delicious. I wanted to see how a more abstract
approach would lend itself in *Art Alive!* without relying on thick,
dark lines to illustrate an image.

I had this idea after watching the movie, *They call me Trinity,*
starring Terence Hill and Bud Spencer. Food is often used in a
comical way and is a motivation for the characters, especially
baked beans. I wanted to capture the feel of a Western style
landscape with bacon and eggs.

Angry Fly
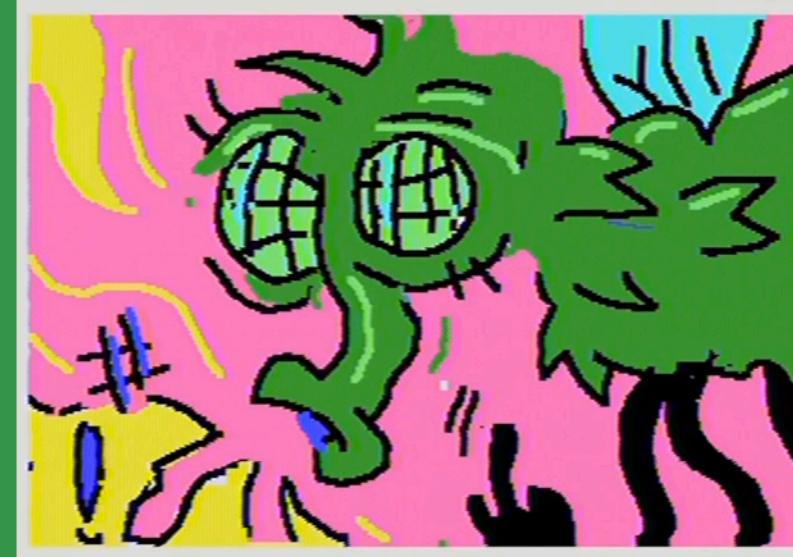
Sometimes the smallest things have so much to stay. Pent up with rage, this angry fly is letting the world know he isn't happy. Sadly nothing can hear his rage except him. Watching flies buzz around their movements seem so extreme so I wanted Angry Fly to have a lot of personality.

Because *Art Alive!* limits you to 16 colours per picture, you can't incorporate many subtle colours into each piece. I wanted to use one of my favourite colour combinations, pink and green, to further develop a fly character.

Flies in games room, 2022

Dead Rodent

This mouse has perished, but not forgotten. The skateboard that struck it now carries the body to its final resting place with a crown of corns (corn kernels) and ceremonial flies. Similar to the beheading of the can, it's a look at the small moments that occur around us.

I got my first skateboard in 2022 and loved the shape of it. The shape of the board gave me a powerful way to frame the piece.

Dead Rodent, 2022

Toaster Ghost

Sometimes even the most evil spirits don't get to choose how they haunt us. Can you imagine if your own breakfast wanted to seek revenge?

Art Alive! can make composing an image difficult. There's no way to readjust, change size once you start drawing. Using a combination of straight lines in the benchtop, jagged edges in the electricity and the toast, I wanted to build out a composition with movement.

Electric Ghost, 2022

Killer TV Strikes Again

With a vicious lust for death, the Killer TV stands beside
its latest victim as a doorway opens, revealing the carnage
that just unfolded. I wanted this piece to tell a story in
one image, framed around the boxy killer TV set, with its
expressive face and long, probing tongue. The yellow shape
is the light pouring in from the open doorway and on the
right hand side, a pile of bones.

Televisions feature a lot through my work, especially older
CRT (cathode ray tube) sets that could light up a living
room with a beautiful glow.

Toilet Terror

Every time you sit on a toilet, you're trusting something isn't lurking below in the water. Toilet Terror is an invasion of your space, and peace and that's portrayed in the composition. It uses most of the screen space available to reach out from the centre. The tentacles help add a sense of movement and contrast with the larger solid surfaces of the pink toilet.

Toilet Terror was inspired by a book I saw as a child, also called Toilet Terror. I remembered the smooth textures of the porcelain and the slimy tentacle, and wanted to pay homage to the spooky kids books that entertained me and fed into my creativity and imagination.

Toilet Terror, 2023

Seen above is the first attempt at Toilet Terror. Most
pieces weren't revisited after recording but I felt
this concept deserved a second attempt to correct
the composition, placing the toilet further into the
middle and leaving more space for tentacles.

Blenderhead

Ever get the feeling your brain is leaking out of every hole? Like someone shoved a mixer in your skull and gave your insides a good whisking? Blenderhead does. Even when looking calm at the beach, nothing behind the shades is working like it should. I know Blenderhead resonates with a lot of people.

I've been described as chilled out. Rarely do I feel relaxed. Drawing, painting and art are some of the few things I feel I can focus on totally.

Blenderhead, 2021

Fish Bones

I wanted to create a tribute to something that stuck with me as a kid, something that felt gross and radical. Fish Bones is an attempt to design a piece with considerable detail using strong shadows to draw focus and separate the objects in the trash.

Art Alive! requires you to use the Sega Control Pad. With the available tools, drawing small details is challenging. I wanted to see how I could make an image feel more gritty and cluttered. To achieve the look I was inconsistent with my outlines and used most of the colour palette in designing this piece.

Here I am drawing Fish Bones on Sega's *Art Alive!*

Art Alive! comes bundled with a few tools to help you create your work of art. There's a pencil tool, a spray can, a paint bucket, shape tools as well as a freeform line tool. These pieces were illustrated using the freeform line tool. Using the directional pad on the controller, you can orient where you want your line to go. Then pressing A or B on the controller, you can either move your cursor, or draw with your cursor. For most of these pieces, I would put down a solid background colour, and then begin illustrating over the top of it. Because there's no layers you need to be strategic in how you compose your artwork otherwise, you'll be spending a lot of time making adjustments to colour.

Self portrait while sneezing, 2022

Who the hell am I?

Hi, I'm Christopher (Bruiser) Bentley.

I want to capture and share that warm nostalgic feeling of my own childhood in everything I create. It's helped me connect with people, understand myself better and empower my work with a loud sense of fun.

By using both old and new technology, we see how we overcome limitations and create new challenges, such as digital obselence.

I love visual communication and the power of capturing a mood or feeling through images (not just using *Art Alive!*). You can find out more about my design work through Bootgum.

Thank you so much for taking the time and supporting the work I do. I hope it gives you a little bit of the joy it gave me making it.

As seen on TV
produced by Christopher Be
All work produced in 2022 un

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