



# Monsters, Inc.

GRAPHIC ARTIST TIMOTHY YOUNG HAS MADE A LIVING BY THINKING LIKE A KID.

## YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN

Timothy Young's work before, but you wouldn't necessarily recognize his face. His right hand, however, has been seen by millions.

Young, an animator turned toymaker turned graphic designer turned children's book author, has developed a number of high-profile products over the years, but the only part of Young that ever made it into the spotlight was his right hand, which made a cameo in the Peter Gabriel music video *Big Time*, for which he provided animation models. Though Young was excited by his work on the project, "so many people thought it was much cooler that my hand was in the video," he says, laughing.

Young got an early start on his career, sketching, doodling, and Play-Doh sculpting his way through childhood. His first job was at the children's television show "Pee-Wee's Playhouse," where he built animation models for the Penny skits about a little girl with pennies for eyes. Numerous toys, ads, animations and sketchbooks later, Young is married with three children and recently published his first book, *I'm Looking for a Monster!*

Standing in his studio, a small office overlooking the backyard swimming pool of his rural Easton home. Young, a pensive man with a surprisingly serious face, speaks enthusiastically about his creations lining the shelves on his walls.

He picks up a Cap'n Crunch cereal box advertising a mail-in offer for Meanies, the anti-beanie baby Young designed. The plush toys mimicked the Beanie Baby's cute character with matching limerick package but replaced friendly faces with names like "Splat the Road-Kill Kat," who, as the name suggests, is the recent victim of a graphic hit-and-run, and "Floaty the Fish," who'll soon be traveling to

the giant fish-bowl in the sky via local plumbing." [Quaker Oats] received the most complaints for those toys than for any other give-away," Young remarks proudly.

A plush and plastic Bart Simpson that Young designed for a Burger King give-away sits next to the box. Young was the first person ever to create a Simpson doll. At the time, the family's hair had only been depicted in 2-D cartoons, and Young had to figure out what the trade-marked tresses should look like in 3-D. He's since heard that Simpsons' animators have used his dolls to help create their 3-D specials.

**"THE ALLURE OF MONSTERS IS THAT THEY'RE AS REAL AS YOU MAKE THEM OUT TO BE."**

Young's more recent work, however, is flatter.

In 2005, he started Creatures & Characters, an online company through which he develops, licenses, and promotes his characters and ideas. Young wanted his own business because, after years of working for other people, he didn't own the rights to anything he created. Now he had a legal claim to his own work.

Though his portfolio and sketchbooks contain a wide range of characters resembling everything from children to aliens, Young always loved drawing monsters. "I can't stop the ideas [for monsters] from coming into my head," he says.

For Young, a monster's physical appearance is inexorably linked with its story. Sometimes he'll see an image in his head, and its background tale will unfold as he transfers it to paper.

*I'm Looking for a Monster!* follows a young boy through fourteen bold, bright pages as he scopes out a diverse group of creatures. Silhouettes of monsters with horns and claws and teeth literally jump off the page, and small details, like the individual fangs that snap at readers in the middle of the book, hint at how much the creator seems to care about his creations.

"As a kid," Young says, "I was afraid of monsters, but I was also drawn to them." Monsters give children something to conquer, he explains, and make them realize that they have power over something. "The

allure is that there as real as you make them out to be."

Currently, Young is simultaneously returning to his roots in the toy industry and pursuing new career opportunities. He's working to develop some of his characters from the book into dolls, something he's done for several TV shows, including "The Simpsons," "Sesame Street," and "Pee-Wee's Playhouse." He's also working on the follow-up to *I'm Looking for a Monster!*, called *I'm Looking for a Dinosaur!*, as well as hoping to take his characters into whatever medium they decide to wander—maybe even TV or film.

Young feels lucky to have accomplished something most people only dream of: never growing up. "I've gotten to retain what I liked doing as a kid and turned it into a business."

-AUDREY MURRAY