

HOME & DESIGN

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FROM THE EDITORS OF LAS VEGAS HOME & DESIGN MAGAZINE



TK RUBRIC

"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE."

Words that have been irrevocably immortalized in the canon of pop culture. And even today, more than 40 years following their initial broadcast to the world, they still ring true. Of course, that isn't to deny the wisdom of perhaps an equally quotable Beatles lyric: "I get by with a little help from my friends."

With nearly 600 stage and acrobatic props for each performance, LOVE is undoubtedly one of the largest shows on The Strip. Yet from the intricate and elegant designs of Cirque du Soleil's creative braintrust in Montreal arise challenges of structural integrity and durability.

That's where Mark Jenkins steps into the spotlight.

As head of props for LOVE, Jenkins works with the designers to ensure that these oftentimes delicate and fragile objects can endure the rigorous test of 10 shows per week, 52 weeks per year. "My role is making sure the props are in pristine condition," he says. "Everyone will probably see something different in the prop, but it's my job to make sure they get that enjoyment."

But the importance of Jenkins' role extends far beyond the perfunctory goal of maintenance, with implications in the development of a relationship between audience and performer. "The props in the show are really an extension of the characters," he notes.

Perhaps the most striking example can be seen through the character of Eleanor Rigby, who pulls the weight of a candlelit train through the rubble of a post-war nation. "It's her memories that she's carrying around with her," Jenkins explains. "The props enhance the audience's impression of what these people are."

Hailing from Morecambe, England — a town roughly 60 miles north of Liverpool — it seems only natural that Jenkins would gravitate toward the Fab Four. In fact, his father was a musician and construction worker whose bandmates signed his name beneath the Beatles' at Liverpool's own Cavern Club. And when the opportunity to



Left // tk // Above // tk // Below, left // tk // Bottom, left // tk // Photos by Sabin Orr //

KING OF PROP

// TK DEK // BY LISA BROWN



join such an inspired artistic effort arose, Jenkins jumped in feet first.

With LOVE since creation in 2005, Jenkins first joined Cirque du Soleil in 2002 during the creation phase of ZUMANITY. Prior to that, the former semi-pro soccer player worked in film, theatre, and music videos in Los Angeles, preceded by a stint as a cruise ship technical director from 1995 to 1998.

While his peers are aware of his contributions to Cirque du Soleil, many don't realize the fine art component of Jenkins' life. A graduate of the College of Design & Art, he continues to practice his craft in his downtime — predominately in realistic, figurative, landscape and sunset paintings.

The creative process appears to hit a fork in the road for Jenkins when it comes to the professional and personal realm. He describes his work on LOVE as "very methodical," beginning with visualization and design, followed by two or three mock-ups prior to the birth of the finalized product. "If I'm creating artwork outside of Cirque du Soleil, it's in my head and goes straight to canvas," he adds. "I don't do sketches; I see it, put it straight down and fix

it after that."

Given the hectic state of the modern world and his life as a family man with four children, it's little surprise to hear that Jenkins is perpetually on the go; yet visitors to Jenkins' online portfolio are greeted with the words, "When I paint, I feel a certain sense of spiritual calmness."

The quote was actually derived from a comment made by a spectator who, upon looking at one of Jenkins' sunsets, said that it calmed them down. "I realized that's when I'm at my calmest, is when I'm painting," Jenkins says. "That's the only time I really slow down and go into my own world."

That serenity also finds its place backstage at LOVE, which is perhaps ironic given the nature of live theatre. "You need to be calm, especially when things go wrong — which they do quite often," jokes Jenkins. "If you're calm, it exudes to other people."

Although "Strawberry Fields" had long since been Jenkins' favorite Beatles tune, through his work on LOVE that preference has been redirected toward "A Day in the Life."

"I never used to have images in my head, but now when I listen to Beatles music, the images are there for me," Jenkins says.

And his reaction to the announcement of Cirque du Soleil's impending Elvis show at MGM MIRAGE's CityCenter? "I'm already thinking about what they're going to do; so when I listen to Elvis now, I see images I would use," he says with a smile. "It has affected me in the way I listen to music."

For a sneak peek at Jenkins' "The Windows to the Soul" collection, check out www.thewindowstothet-soul.com. His portfolio of more traditional pieces may be found at www.markjenkinsfineart.com. //



STYLE FILE



// ASK THE EDITOR //

I MUST ADMIT, SOMETIMES THE editors of *Las Vegas Home & Design* are impressed by simple, little details. Scouring Websites is part of our job — searching every angle possible for the latest and greatest home decor products. If you haven't been shopping on the internet lately, you might be surprised at what's out there. New and improved navigation tools are available to Web shoppers that make designing every room of the home easier and more affordable. On a recent fact-finding mission, Lauren Stewart, *H+D*'s art director, discovered that target.com, has a search by color tool. On their most current home page, westelm.com features a shop-by-personality option that showcases three new rooms in three new ways: the zen room, the modern room and the natural room. Potterybarn.com captures the appeal of green and eco-friendly products with a searchable menu for sustainable materials, organic bedding and natural light. Resources are plentiful. Choices abound. Good design can be found where you least expect it and it doesn't have to be the most expensive or the most exclusive — it is what we at *H+D* like to call, well-curated. Rolling up your sleeves and doing an afternoon of intensive searching, whether it's on the Web or in a vintage store, will yield both a tremendous sense of satisfaction and potentially some great bargain finds. No matter your source, as they say, it's the journey that makes the prize so much more sweet. // **Melinda Sheckells, editor** *Las Vegas Home & Design* //

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