



Clockwise from top: *Topsy-Turvy Times of Cockamamie Mumbo Jumbo*; *Stain on Lemon Yellow*; the Claytons; the Claytons' studio.



OH BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

The Claytons are bound by blood, paint, and ink.

Rob and Christian Clayton's world is filled with imagery of small vermin, an oversized hypodermic needle, and gas masks, but bright, electric colors and a sense of humor make their work seem uniquely upbeat. The Clayton Brothers, as they're known within the American outsider art movement, collaborate on large-scale mixed-media pieces and 3-D sculpture installations.

"The process kind of started because we share so much of our lives together," says Christian, the younger brother. "It seems like when we started to collaborate, our singular artist voice became amplified."

Both graduates of the Art Center College of Design, in Pasadena, CA, the Clayton brothers share a 1,000-square-foot studio space in La Crescenta and have a unique approach to collaboration. Rob and Christian start each piece with no idea of the direction it will take. "We don't like knowing what it's going to be. We lose interest so fast if it's

that way," Christian acknowledges.

The brothers also work on everything separately. If Rob's stuck on a piece, he'll pass it off to his younger brother, and vice versa. "When I have that other mark on the image, it's like I'm looking at someone else's painting in a way, so that gets me going again," Christian says. "The main thing is whatever comes out of our studio is collaborative in the end."

"We were drawing on our arms at a young age—it was inevitable that we would get tattoos," says Christian, whose favorite tattoo is a drawing his brother did for him—an interpretation of the Woody Guthrie song "What Did the Deep Sea Say?" that's on the inside of his forearm. Rob's favorite tattoo is a Rose of No Man's Land done by Graham Chaffee from Purple Panther Tattoo in Los Angeles.

Though the brothers still create art individually, don't expect to see any of it. "We don't show it publicly," says Rob. "It just seems like something's missing." —Kara Pound