

the citizens

A painting of a monkey wearing a hat made of newspaper, set against a background of a sun and a landscape. The monkey has a serious expression and is looking directly at the viewer. The hat is made of folded newspaper with some text visible, including 'WIKIPEDIA' and 'BOY'. The background features a large, textured sun in shades of yellow and orange, and a dark, textured landscape below.

O.O.I. Case Study

Notes concerning the identity of itinerant musical collective, The Citizens. These files have been encrypted by the Department of Intolerance and may not be read by anyone other than DOI employees with level 4 clearance or above.

Report Contents

Page 3. Visual Attributes Page 4. Literary Attributes Page 5. Summary of Recent Trends (“We Are Just Like You”)

LOGO

the citizens

COLORS



IMAGERY



clockwise from top left: Arisman painting highlighting the irony of man's lopsided evolution • Kitsch spaceship • Antiquated electrical circuitry • Enik the Sleestack (one of lead singer mark lesseraux's early gurus) • Warped clown • Row of suburban houses, at once creepy and nostalgic

In short, The Citizens' visual aesthetic has become reasonably coherent and recognizable. This worrisome trend parallels the band's musical evolution, threatening to expand name recognition through viral distribution of a distinct iconography and brand experience.

STORY

Along with its newfound visual aesthetic, there is evidence that The Citizens have been developing a series of narratives that capture their singular sensibility. Common themes include but are not limited to...

- Space-age cave painters
- Acid-tinged musical theatre
- Slapstick aria
- Old analog objects in a post-digital landscape
- Hope-inspiring outcasts

The following story has been attributed to lead singer Mark Lesseraux, though many maintain it was actually penned by a curious sibling whose true identity remains unknown...



As children, while exploring the surreal foilage that blanketed our lost land, Chaka and I happened upon a cave filled with paintings that were thousands, perhaps millions, of years old. We kept our discovery secret, and spent our evenings exploring the vast painted panoramas filled with bison, dinosaurs, and broken-down spaceships. One day we discovered Enik, the time-travelling scientist, standing transfixed before an enormous outgrowth of rock. On it was painted the kind face of some ancient simian, eyes glowing in the darkness. Enik, mesmerized, wept openly as if bearing witness to some great revelation...

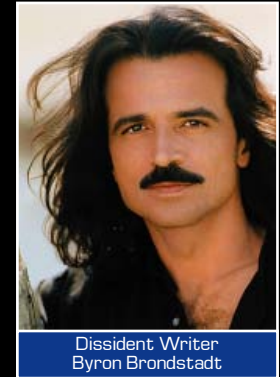
Light years later, while touring the galaxy with a now-defunct musical theatre troupe from the Virgo supercluster, I was accidentally left behind by my companions. Lost and hounded by a herd of pale barbaric creatures, I escaped into a cave. Descending deep into its chamber, until the voices pursuing me could no longer be heard, I came upon an ancient painting - the creature it depicted was barely recognizable, but the eyes... those I could not forget. I remembered Enik and our lost land, and yes, I too wept openly, as I contemplated the gravity of all that was and all we had abandoned...

RECENT TRENDS

"We Are Just Like You"

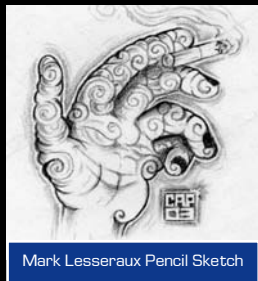
Evidence points to a radical shift in The Citizens marketing strategy, involving the exploitation of mainstream social networking tools to highlight what dissident writer Byron Brondstadt termed, "the friendliness factor."

The friendliness factor refers to the calculated adoption of a populist public persona for the purpose of establishing a "personal connection" with a given consumer market. We see this demonstrated quite frequently by "indie" rock musicians, who make ample use of blogs and social networking tools in their quest to attract more fans.



A defining characteristic of the friendliness factor is extensive use of irony and "lowbrow" cultural refernces: archetypes of the "uncool" such as John Tesh and Yanni (Yiannis Chrysomallis) are employed frquently to establish a persona of fshionable nerdiness on the part of the writer or artist.

In the case of The Citizens, evidence points to increased blog entries and YouTube postings by singer/songwriter Mark Lesseraux. In these blatent attempts to employ the friendliness factor, Lesseraux disseminates ill-conceived pencil sketches, stream-of-consciousness comedy skits, and videotaped covers of popular 80's songs.



Links

- citizensmusic.com
- [citizens blog](#)
- [The Citizens on You Tube](#)