

# TOBEN SEYMOUR

## THE UPCOMING VIDEO DIRECTOR CAUSES TROUBLE IN VENICE BEACH

With a knack for making the real surreal, the ordinary extraordinary and the normal into the mentally insane, the master of animation Toben Seymour creates mind-boggling music videos that might just rip the genre to shreds.

"I do a lot of day-dreaming and pretending," laughs the fervent 27-year-old. "My ideas come to me randomly. For the most part I have never had a difficult time using my imagination in my day-to-day life." Turned on by old-school special effects and making things by hand, Toben has made videos for artists like The Willows, Neon Blonde, and A Gun Called Tension. "I got into making videos because I love music," says the filmmaker. "I love experimenting with film, animation, sound, people, toys, food, interactivity... any random ideas I get."

The fourth child in a family of eight, it was at the University of Southern California School of Cinema that Toben and his gang of filmmaking friends founded their own production company, Commondeer. Based in Venice Beach, this group of visual mavericks has produced and directed music videos for everyone from Bloc Party and All American Rejects to Norah Jones.

"We're a good bunch," says Toben. "Although sometimes our ideas get us into trouble." He pauses, grinning mischievously. "I think up something and suddenly I'll need it to happen. For example, I once had the idea to put my teacher's face into a pie during an all-school assembly. That got me suspended for a few days."

Driven by the need to create and overcome with a passion for the fantastic, Toben Seymour plans on keeping his feet and his dirty hands firmly planted behind the camera for a long time to come. But what are Toben's thoughts on the future of music videos? "It's tough to say," he drawls, running his fingers through his moustache. "Some of my friends who direct think the industry is burning out because there's not much money in it anymore. But internet broadcasting is great, and hopefully record labels will harness that potential and start pouring more money in - I've been trying to sell the idea of interactive videos, but it's a tough idea to get across." He shrugs. "Music videos will be fine. I'll make sure of it." KARLEY SCIORTINO

PHOTOGRAPHY ATLANTA RASCHER

[www.commondeer.com/toben](http://www.commondeer.com/toben)





