



**Robert Young:** Do you think that if you had grown up in Taipei that you would have still pursued an art career? Do you think it was in your blood?

**James Jean:** I do think about that sometimes, how I would've turned out in an alternate reality in which my family stayed in Taiwan. There's not much of an art market there, so the economic limitations would probably force me into in a more responsible career, probably tossing scallion

pancakes in the night market. I could eat those all day. The way you have to toss and spin them around on the hot grill can be quite hypnotic. Illusions of sweaty nights selling fried pancakes and pork puns aside, I'm still concerned with alternate realities and choices, but mostly those that occur within a picture: whether or not to "activate" this section of the picture plane (where to drape Batgirl's cape), what kind of "mark-making" to employ (how to describe the trajectory of a tooth after

a Bat-punch), assess the socio-historical context in which the piece exists (why do I have to draw the new Robin with enormous bosoms?). I guess it's in my blood.

**Young:** Assuming that a career in the arts had somehow not been an option for you, do you think you could have been fulfilled in another career? If so doing what?

**Jean:** I used to play the trumpet or piano, but as much as I practiced, I could never get as good as those 12 yr old prodigies with helmet bowl haircuts. There's something very satisfying about playing in an orchestra, where you can literally melt and disappear into sound.

**Young:** Do you have any artistically inclined family members who either nurtured your interest in art, or passed some talent down the gene pool?

**Jean:** Not really. I always drew on my own. My parents provided a good home and environment for me, where I could have piano lessons and draw in my own room on a limitless supply of computer paper. I suppose I share some of my more 'artistic' qualities with my mom, who always liked to sew curtains and her own clothes.

**Young:** When you were a little kid did your coloring books look dramatically better than those of all the other kids you knew?

**Jean:** After all the other kids beat me up or conveniently forgot to invite me to their birthday parties, I would color so good and so fast that I bled crayon.