

PORTRAIT

Geoff McFetridge

*Based in Los Angeles, California, Geoff McFetridge works creatively across the disciplines of graphic design, film, and visual art. He is known for a powerful visual style that explores the tension between geometric and organic forms, detail, and abstraction. His designs have been featured on album covers, snowboards, athletic shoes, wallpaper, and more. In addition to creating animations for his own short films and music videos, he also designed the opening sequences for films such as **The Virgin Suicides** and **Where the Wild Things Are**. Born in Canada, he was schooled at the Alberta College of Art and the California Institute of the Arts.*



Nature and outdoor scenarios seem to feature prominently in your work. Would you call yourself an “outdoors person”? If yes, what is your way of spending time outdoors? What does it mean for you?

If being an “outdoors person” means doing things like surfing, trail running, riding bikes, skiing, and camping, then yes—I love that stuff. Even though I live in Los Angeles the outdoors is something I like to have as part of my everyday. I can’t always sleep under the stars, but we bought our house to be close to the mountains and Griffith Park. I get to my studio through the park by running or riding over a small mountain. There are a lot of places near my house where I can do many, many miles without seeing people. There is true wilderness 30 minutes from my studio. I like the duality of that, and being in this city of so many millions. What does outside mean to me? This is a bit cheesy but—outdoors is my meditation. I don’t think you get inspiration from meditation, but meditation leaves you open for inspiration.

How do nature and outdoor scenarios find their way into your work? Do they relate mostly to briefings or are they more a transformation of your own experiences?

I think I am a different person for the experiences I have had outdoors, and that is the main thing. Really I should spend more time in galleries and less time goofing off! I do some commercial work for some outdoors clients though, because I like what they do and I use their gear. In my work for Patagonia, for example, I like to think that I am working from within my own experiences. It is pretty common to find

surfers who are also artists, but most ultra-runners, cyclists, or skiers are not artists, so I think it is interesting that I can interpret these worlds visually. Maybe that is unique. On a deeper level I am interested in worlds. Surfing, skiing, cycling, and trail running are worlds. I wonder sometimes if I purposely seek out worlds that are very uncreative, sort of mindless as a way for balancing out my life?

“We are all ‘outside’ but on a sliding scale of memorable-ness.”

All the stuff I love the most is stuff where literally my mind is blank or at least active in a super pea-sized spot. And yet this pea-sized part of my brain can lead me to memorable experiences. Mostly I am alone, but sometimes sharing them with other people, but mainly pushing myself to my limits physically (and at times mentally). The feeling I get is that over the years I have learned how to “invent experience.” With skateboarding I would often marvel how I was totally sweaty and eating crap down a flight of stairs while surrounded by people in suits going to work. Similar to when you get out of the water after surfing and someone might be just sitting on a towel eating snacks reading a book. We are all “outside” but on a sliding scale of memorable-ness.