

GURU ADRIAN



"After five years of cult megahype" says illustrator David Art Wales, "I finally feel that what I'm doing means something, that it has got substance."

What David has been doing is drawing a monthly 'Guru Adrian' page in Countdown. Australia's answer to Smash Hits – but Adrian has become more than a cartoon, he's a phenomenon.

The doubt surrounding the question of his existence – the police even became involved, when they saw a striking similarity between him and a missing child – and the breadth of his popularity have elevated him almost to real guru status. Media bigshots love him, and Adrian gets 50-100 letters every week from young teenagers, saying things like "You make sense Adrian. Thanks for not treating us like morons."

Adrianism is a simple philosophy: "Every situation is a potentially FUN situation so long as you're not hurting yourself or anyone else!" Adrian is an anti-media media figure, an arch individualist who, David hopes, spreads warmth amongst the sexist ads and humourless pop in Countdown. "People who know me say 'there's Adrian', but I say 'no, you're Adrian'. Sometimes they ask me how, with all the wars and starvation in the world, I can write about such trivial things. If everyone thought like Adrian, those things wouldn't exist." Thanks to relentless cult PR – including rings, stickers, T-shirts and fun tokens – Adrian's fame has spread overseas. Many pop groups have Adrian shirts at home, and 'Adrian had fun here' was found graffitied on a Tokyo wall. David is hoping to syndicate the page to London and New York magazines, and his ingenious slogans – 'Guru Adrian is a load of crap! - Fertilize your life.' – and charming humour should travel perfectly.

It was on the third day that Adrian rose again from the shed and announced to the world: "Y'know...I could never keep a secret." Simon Witter