

Making the
World a
Better Place

THE POWER OF CLOTHING

Special Edition:
The Pure Joy of
Personal
Expression



17

WINTER



Life Wear

← Well-known popular artist, Jason Polan, greets the kids, with bananas, paper cups, beach balls, T-shirts and pens.

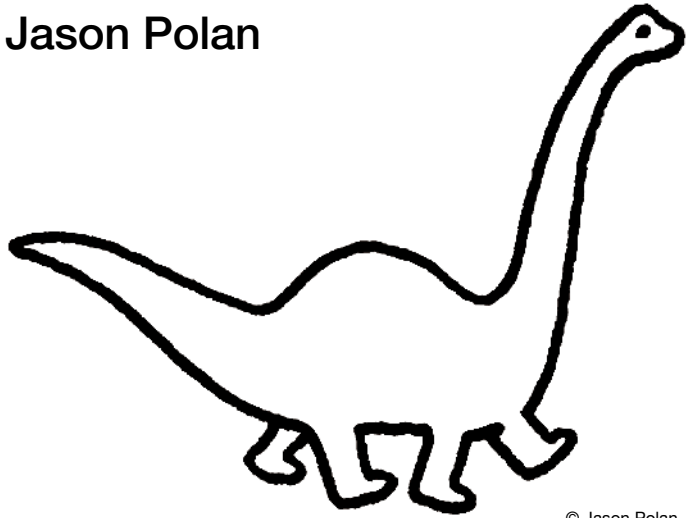
Children from New York City homeless shelters visit the UNIQLO 5th Avenue Global Flagship Store.

I wonder what's going to happen.

Jason Polan × UNIQLO

Let's draw

with Jason Polan



© Jason Polan

Jason Polan is one of New York's most popular artists.

He goes out every day with sketchbook and pen in hand and draws people he meets on the street, in a coffee shop or in the subway.

He draws a person in under a minute, the tip of his pen moving deftly and smoothly across the white paper. He captures a telling snapshot of his subject at a point in time, scribbles a brief comment of where they met, and the sketch is complete.

Jason puts new pictures on his personal blog EVERY PERSON IN NEW YORK almost daily. He receives commissions from established stores, magazines and newspapers, including the New Yorker and the New York Times. His rise from obscurity to most-talked about artist reminds you of Keith Haring in the 1980s.

Jason, born in Michigan in 1982, liked

drawing when he was young. He came to New York partly because he loved the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and wanted to work there. His decision to sketch all of the works in MoMA and send it as his resume has become a well-known story. The museum didn't hire him but has invited him to many MoMA events as his popularity as an artist grew. A video of his artistic creations has even been placed on the MoMA website.

So what's so great about his pictures?

They show everyone walking a different path in life, each one precious in its own way. His firm, lucid sketches are a powerful affirmation of life, and express his love for the people of New York like no words could.

Jason puts his sketching schedule on his blog. If you see a casually dressed guy in a baseball cap sketching on the streets of New York, it's probably Jason Polan.



Jason Polan × UNIQLO

Well-known artist Jason Polan drawing pictures up close with children living in New York shelters.

The UNIQLO 5th Avenue store is just a stone's throw from MoMA. Its numerous collaborative MoMA events help make the store a focal spot for New Yorkers.

Photographs by Jason Lewis

The number of children in the US who can't live in their own house is rising every year. Homelessness is becoming increasingly serious in New York as well.

People lose their homes for many different reasons. Unemployment is an obvious one, but soaring rents and domestic violence are also to blame.

Lose your house and you also lose the table you ate at every day, the bed you slept in, the bath you washed in, the sofa you sat on to watch TV and play with pets. It can be really tough on the kids who have to cope with their parents' changing circumstances.

A New York City survey conducted in summer 2016 revealed the worst results ever, with over 80,000 children at state-funded elementary schools who have already lost homes and are living in shelters or with relatives or friends.



Jason Polan and staff at the UNIQLO 5th Avenue store came up with the idea of inviting children living in shelters to a half-day in-store drawing workshop. We were in the middle of planning T-shirts featuring Jason Polan sketches, and arranging some exclusive drawing events at the store using Jason's hand-written map of Manhattan, so the suggestion to hold a drawing event for

homeless children just emerged naturally as part of that process.

"I used to draw as a kid all the time. I want these kids to experience how much fun drawing can be, and also, selfishly, I want to draw with them!" said Jason.

Could such a small thing help these kids in any way? We won't know unless we try. Then, let's do it.

UNIQLO New York 5th Avenue Store

Thanks to our partnership with MoMA, the New York 5th Avenue store is known as a place where clothes meet art through the SPRZ NY (Surprise New York) project. The store features an individual artist corner, an event space and a Starbucks. UNIQLO also sponsors free entry to MoMA on Fridays from 4–8pm.



The kids at the UNIQLO 5th Avenue store. Drawing on a banana? On a paper cup? I get to take home a beach ball! I know I can draw anything, but what? Some kids look anxiously over at what the next kid was doing, some kids concentrate on their paper cups. After the banana, paper cup, beach ball, comes the white T-shirt.

Hey, let me see!

Jason Polan × UNIQLO

Art is Everything



Three buses approach the UNIQLO 5th Avenue store with kids on board from shelters in Brooklyn and Queens. Full of excitement, the kids approach the forest of high-rise buildings that is Manhattan.

What is going to happen next? Mom said something about drawing pictures, but is it going to be like school work, or something?

Most of the kids look like they are going to start complaining about being tired or bored any minute.

It's 9:30am, and the bus draws up outside UNIQLO. The kids enter the bright, glass-walled store. Some of the boys still look puzzled, but some of the girls' faces brighten up with excitement. Is this a fashion store? I love clothes!

The kids sit on the stairs leading up to the mezzanine floor and listen to Jason Polan and UNIQLO staff explain the drawing workshop. They look serious but some giggle when the staff say something funny.

"All of you are free to draw whatever you want. If you draw things you like or want to draw, that's art. You can draw your own face or your friend's face. You can draw a happy memory or a word that you like. There are no fixed rules. There are no mistakes in art. Everything around you becomes art when

you draw it," explain the staff.

"Jason Polan is going to draw with you today. He goes out every day armed with a pen and draws people walking on the streets of New York, in the subway or sitting on a park bench, people he just happened to meet. All of it is art."

The kids start to enjoy the more relaxed atmosphere than at school. Instead of a teacher, it feels like listening to easy-going young men and women.

"You don't have to draw on white paper. You can draw on a banana, a take-out paper cup, or a ball you take to the beach or the pool. Your Mom and Dad might get mad if you go home and draw on the TV or the refrigerator. We say that for your own good!" (lol)

The talk over, the kids all get a black pen, go up to the large table on the mezzanine floor and receive a banana. Now the drawing begins.

Most of the kids have never drawn on a banana. They think really hard about what to draw and some start to make the banana resemble a face.

Jason goes around encouraging them all. "That's interesting." "Wow! That looks good." "That's great!"





The kids are all fired up, and the atmosphere is completely different in the bus on the way back.

How was it?



Great!

The kids draw on a banana, paper cup, beach ball—and then get a blank, white T-shirt. They have had time to relax drawing on different solids, so they quieten down and get on to it straight away.

Jason Polan believes drawing is about critically assessing your subject. The kids are definitely thinking deeply about something in their heads, or in their hearts. They draw freely.

The kids looked satisfied and seemed to feel a real sense of achievement when the workshop ended and they put their banana, paper cup, beach ball, T-shirt and sweets in a bag to take home.

The atmosphere in the bus on the return journey was completely different. The kids were lively and bright, smiling, talking and eating bananas. Jason was really pleased with how the event turned out. One dad grinned when he saw how happy his daughter was. Everyone seemed to realize the value of the short trip to Manhattan.

Low-income families need financial support and help with establishing a stable living environment. But kids also need to experience fun things that are unrelated to their immediate financial needs, but can help them build a strong future for themselves.

The kids got to draw the picture they wanted, and those pictures got loads of

praise from adults. Drawing the pictures helped them to realize they are vital, vibrant individuals. With all the challenges of no longer having a home, this praise could help make them feel happy and confident in themselves. Only a few hours of that could make a difference in their lives.

Americans often refer to the proverb, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

The UNIQLO 5th Avenue store holds in-store workshops for homeless children from shelters four times a year in cooperation with the New York City Department of Homeless Services, a long-term partner of UNIQLO, together with Free Arts NYC, a local nonprofit that provides kids with art education to help foster self-confidence. The kids get to go around MoMA before opening time with a special guide to see all the exhibits, including artwork by well-known artists who are featured on UNIQLO graphic T-shirts such as Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring and Yayoi Kusuma. The kids then come back to the 5th Avenue store and create their own T-shirts.

This time, the kids got to enjoy the precious added bonus of drawing with a professional artist. Can't wait to see who comes next.

Making a difference through clothes

With stores all over the world, UNIQLO is involved in a range of projects that strive to fulfill different children's needs in different countries and regions worldwide.



Shopping Experiences for Intellectually Challenged Children

Singapore

How about giving these kids, who normally shop with their families, the opportunity shop for themselves? After discussions with the teachers, UNIQLO staff played games with the kids in school before going to a UNIQLO store. It was a precious experience not only for the kids, but for the UNIQLO staff and teachers who devised all kinds of ingenious help.



◀ Video
<http://www.uniqlo.com/en/csr/archive/#prettyPhoto/14/>

The Power of Clothing Project

Japan

Children collect used kids clothing for donations to refugees and children in need worldwide. Following a UNIQLO staff visit, children enlist the help of their school and local communities in collecting and dispatching clothing donations. The project aims to teach children about refugee and environmental issues, the true power of clothes, and the value of social contribution.



hope they grow up to be confident adults who can tackle social issues on their own initiative.



◀ Video
<http://www.uniqlo.com/en/csr/archive/#prettyPhoto/11/>

Watch these short videos for a taste of UNIQLO's social responsibility initiatives

www.uniqlo.com/en/csr/archive/

The Power of Clothing back issues

www.uniqlo.com/power_of_clothes/en/

Helping Children Feel Good About Themselves, and Their Future

Children all over the world are born into extreme environments ravaged by war and poverty, and not just in developing countries. To build a brighter future and better society, we have to create safe environments where children can experience happiness.

UNIQLO is an active driver of social responsibility activities, and we are always thinking about ways we can help as a clothing manufacturer. One thing we have learned for sure is that even modest positive experiences can help give children the confidence they need to grow as vibrant, valuable individuals.

We first started supporting children through our refugee and displaced persons program in Serbia. Back in 2013, we launched a shopping experience project to give child refugees and their families the opportunity to choose clothes at a temporary UNIQLO store. Seeing the children's excited expressions was a priceless reminder of the very real and extensive value of clothes.

"That looks really great on you!" The kids had much fun shopping, chatting and picking out clothes with the sales people and event staff and using their coupons to make purchases. The look of satisfaction on their faces when they modeled their chosen outfits was second to none. The event enabled children to experience established social infrastructure, and the joy of wearing clothes they themselves had chosen.

Clothes offer valuable protection against heat or cold, but they also serve as a valuable means of self-expression. The shopping experiences for refugee children and the drawing workshops for children living in homeless shelters might not have a direct impact on their immediate circumstances. However, we plan to continue hosting such events all over the world because we believe they do help nurture and cultivate a sense of confidence in children that they can draw on in the future.

Over the 2016 Christmas season, UNIQLO hosted shopping experiences in 14 stores across the United States for children living in homeless shelters. Nurturing children's confidence in the future is a tall order, but we believe clothes have that certain power.

UNIQLO seeks to share some of its most precious, heartfelt community activities through the Power of Clothing, so we've resized and redesigned this latest issue to make it easier to handle.

www.uniqlo.com/en/csr/

Check our website for more detail on UNIQLO's social responsibility activities



UNIQLO CSR

Search



MOMA
Museum of Modern Art
59th St

MOMA
Museum of Modern Art
59th St

Wow!

Jason Polan x UNIQLO