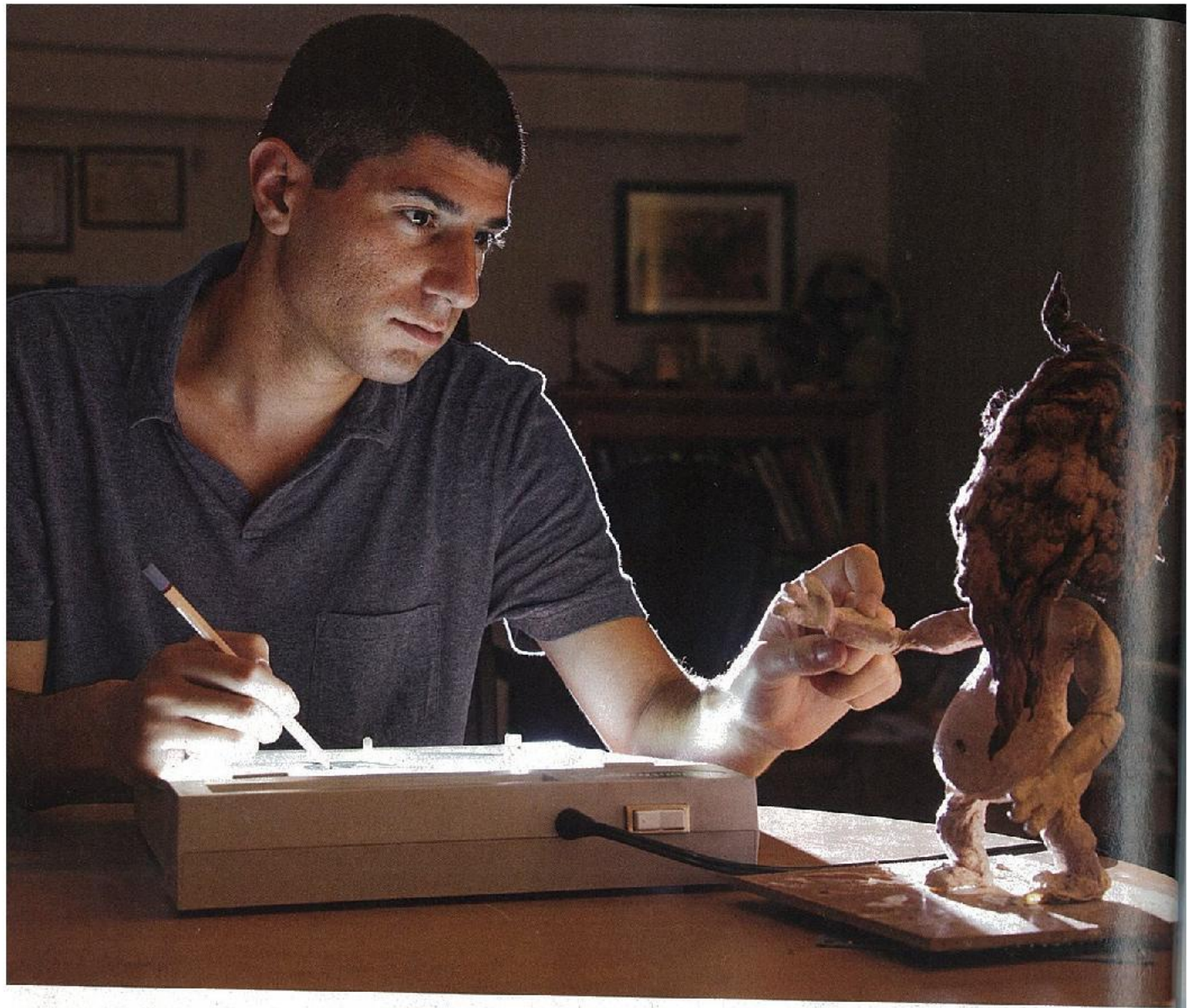




DOUBLE LIFE

Two degrees of separation

How one student did two bachelor's degrees at two separate schools in two different subjects

ADAM SCHACHNER • I'm done with school. The last few years, I've done rather a lot of that at once. Until I graduated in May, I was doing two simultaneous, separate bachelor's degrees at two universities, one in mechanical engineering at McGill University and the other in film animation at Concordia University. Fortunately, these Montreal schools are about 15 minutes away from each other, so teleportation was required, although, honestly, it would have helped.

How was this allowed? I have no idea (although I can see why not), because I never bothered mentioning either university, believing that I might have been annoyed about it. But now that I have two shiny degrees that I

assume can't be revoked (fingers crossed), I figure it's safe enough to reveal the details of my double life.

Since my last year of CÉGEP, I'd always wanted to do some combination of engineering and animation. When I applied for university, I learned Concordia doesn't allow engineering students to do double majors. In the end, though, my portfolio wasn't strong enough, and I was not accepted into the three-year program anyway.

I started off in mechanical engineering at McGill, and I didn't like it. I wanted to be a mechanical engineer because I'd always wanted to be an inventor, and I figured that degree would give me the knowledge to make any-

Not a moment to spare: Schachner had to drop all hobbies, including the bagpipe

thing I could imagine. But then the program at McGill turned out to be totally focused on theory, with barely any practical courses. We never made anything.

Engineering courses tend to start with the professor presenting a formula that can't be solved with simple math, then throwing a bunch of assumptions at it until it can be solved. The rest of the course is spent looking at different cases, where the professor changes the assumptions slightly each time. Because the professor leads the students by the hand and shows them all the combinations of assumptions, no one ever really learns much.

After about a semester or so, I was dying. A vision of film animation popped into my head again, and the idea of dropping engineering was attractive. I checked the deadline to apply to Concordia, and it turned out I had two days to submit my application.

I rummaged around frantically to find my portfolio, tore a bunch of stuff out of it, took pictures of some new artwork, crammed those

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROGER LEMOINE