



IN CONVERSATION WITH JAE COPP

*19K: What is the story behind your new artwork
'Indian Love Song'?*

I was originally given the "Puros Indios" Cigar Box by my good buddy and design machine Timba Smits around the middle of the year to simply create something interesting from. Upon receiving the box I was so impressed with its authenticity and beautiful hand-crafted design. Not long after, my curiosity got the better of me to research its origins. I was immediately inspired by the story to come from it of a very young, passionate and ambitious Cuban fellow by the name of Don Rolando (click [here](#) for full story), whose dream of becoming a "tabacalero" (tobacconist) become a reality through strong morale and a sense of defiance.

19K: How did the artwork itself come about?

After some brainstorming and hours spent reading about the century old tradition of "[Cigar Box Guitars](#)" I decided to create my very own fully functional cigar box guitar. With such an inspirational tale behind the box I thought it only fair to pay credit where credit was due by keeping the box in its original state as possible but still incorporate the aesthetics of an instrument without overwhelming focus on it, so the idea of an ornamental cabinet sprung to mind and so the process begun.



Image:
Indian love song – 2009

Jae Copp

Ornamental cigar box mandolin and cabinet stand,
Hand-crafted and sculptured from local camphor, mango
and tallo wood.

93 x 36 x 22 cm.

\$1650.00

Cont.

19K: What was involved with the materials and process in making this work?

I started off by sketching out several ideas inspired solely through music, traditional hand crafts and the origin of the box. Once happy with the aesthetics I then built a few test runs on older damaged cigar boxes until I was happy with the direction. With the handy resource of my good friends saw mill I was able to hand pick from a variety of off-cut timbers and grains such as Camphor Laurel, Tallow and Mango Wood. Once happy with the timber selection I then realized that further specialized tools were inevitable and splashed out on a scroll-saw and additional wood carving tools.

Forty dusty hours later I had 35 Hand-Sculptured and stained parts ready to roll. The Mandolin/Cabinet head piece was created from Camphor Laurel, while the guitar neck, 14 Hand-Made Frets and 4 Tuning Pegs were made from Tallow Wood. Mango Wood was used to create the base and back rest. After final construction I hunted round for various strings and latches to suit.

19K: The words 'Indian Love Song' conjures up this romantic, almost quixotic vision – what was the origin for its title?

I personally find the titling my work to be as equally important as the piece itself. It is the final way I get to either distract from the obvious or make some things slightly more clear - I actually spend a stupid amount of time deciding on titles. Fortunately this one named itself as I was listening to The Dirty Three's *Indian Love Song* at the time of its making, which I thought was fitting in every aspect. This cigar box mandolin is a one-off artwork, but I hope to continue making and numerous abstract instruments, and for them to sounds as odd as they look.

Artist Bio: Jae Copp was born in Sydney, and currently lives and works in a secluded mountain in Southern Qld. His self-taught artistic influence derives from his travels through London, Canada, America, and most notably Mexico, a place which ignited the ongoing contemporary mythical and folklore theme reflected in Jae's highly-detailed illustrative works on wood and paper. Jae has exhibited extensively in group shows around Australia, including No Comply, 12x12 and Tales from the Cold Ghost. His works have been featured in the following selected publications: Empty, Wooden Toy Quarterly, Frankie, Gold Coast Bulletin, Clay and We Are the Image Makers, and has worked for such clients as Absolut, The Breeders and Red Bull.

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