

## FIVE QUESTIONS FOR...

### GARETH MOONEY

*The Guitar Guy Played Real Cool Feedback And Super Sounding Riffs features Irish painter Gareth Mooney's portraits of musicians who inspired him. Working from photos, Mooney presents a fan's-eye view of idols such as Neil Young, Will Oldham (pictured) and Mark E Smith in thick, colourful oil paint.*

**Was the act of painting these pictures a form of worship?** When I was a teenager I always had posters up in my room, and this is a step above that. It's a way of idolising them, but in a more personal way than just buying a poster. For example, when I was painting Thom Yorke, I would listen to Radiohead at the same time and the songs would affect how I painted.

**The painting of Will Oldham looks rather creepy. Was that deliberate?** It gives the impression of being quite a conventional portrait, but if you look at it properly, it has a feel of sleaze about it, as he's sitting on a bed, he could be naked and he has that look in his eye where you



**don't really know what his intentions are. His music has those undertones. Do your pictures reflect the distance between an idol's image and reality?**

Yes, some of the people were quite difficult to paint because I stared at their pictures and realised that they don't look quite as you imagine them. With Beck, I had to restart four or five times because I just couldn't get it right.

**Did you look at other people's fan art for research?** I looked at a few of those pictures, but when I e-mailed people to ask about them, they would often get quite anxious and embarrassed and wouldn't want to talk about the reasons behind doing them.

**Whose real-life portrait would you most like to paint?** I would love to meet Captain Beefheart, because he's such a strange

character and he's a painter himself. Everything about him intrigues me: his music, his life, his paintings.

*Abi Bliss*

*Tonight until Jan 27, BLOCspace, 198 Arundel Street, Sheffield, Thu to Sun noon to 8pm, tonight preview 8pm to 10pm, free. Tel: 0114 272 3155. [www.blocprojects.co.uk](http://www.blocprojects.co.uk)*