

**GAY** *in the*  
**LIFE**  
**Rob McQuillan**  
BY ROSS FORMAN

**Age**  
47

**Neighborhood**  
Edgewater

**Job**  
Freelance graphic designer and photographer—his website is [robdesign.net](http://robdesign.net).

**Favorite artists**  
“I appreciate all of the local Chicago artists, [such as] Jessica Lucas and Stephen Swanburg. Chicago is very supportive of local artists, and Edgewater is fast becoming a hot, new arts community.”

**Favorite movie**  
Logan’s Run, which “has an amazing colorful production design, and has influenced my art in so many ways.”

**Favorite TV show**  
American Horror Story

**Four people (living or dead) who you’d like to have dinner with**  
“I’m a big Motown fan, so I would love to sit down with Diana Ross and Mary Wilson [of The Supremes], along with Saul Bass (a graphic designer from the 1960s), Keith Haring, Caligula and Marilyn Monroe. ... I need to add a few more chairs.”

Rob McQuillan doesn’t view his job as a freelance graphic designer and photographer as work, but rather, his passion.

“I love having this freedom to create and express myself,” he said.

McQuillan moved to Chicago about seven years ago and sought a job with a local publication, but nothing materialized. “So, I concentrated my efforts to do freelance work, and that turned out to be the best decision I could have made,” he said. “As an artist, it allowed me to reach out in so many directions, and I have done such interesting projects, [including] CD covers, product packaging, and logo design,” among others.

“My job gives me a great outlet for my creative energy.”

McQuillan is often creating postcards because, as he said, “everyone loves getting a postcard in the mail. When you get a beautiful, colorful, or interesting card in the mail, it makes you smile; it’s a great surprise.”

McQuillan is now finishing his first series of children’s books. “The hero of my stories is a wonderful and sweet dog named Lola, and the stories follow her adventures and her discoveries,” he said. “Each story also provides a moral or life lesson. So this is obviously one direction that I want to continue with since I am loving both the writing and the illustrating of these stories. I’m also working on a photographic project about giraffes in Chicago, which I am making into a coffee-table book. And of course, as with any artist, I would love to have an exhibition of my work at some really cool gallery.”



He tagged Photoshop as a “friend” for his photography. “The original photo image that I take is my canvas or starting point. I like to turn an ordinary image into something surprising,” he said. “When I do illustrations, I tend to use bright primary colors and more simplistic shapes. One of my inspirations is the children’s toy Colorforms and also the WPA posters that were created during The Depression.”

McQuillan said he dreams of designing a magazine, cover to cover. “I’ve done it once before and would love to do it again,” he said.

McQuillan will showcase his work at the Edgewater Fall Art Fair, Sept. 28-29, marking his fourth time participating.

“The people who are organizing the event work so hard and do a great job,” he said. “The most fun for me at these events is meeting all kinds of people and talking about art, photography, and just life in general. There is always a great energy and vibe at these events.”

