

Alternative Markets: Art Brut and Self-Taught Art • Favourite Tools/Techniques of 2015

ArtAscent

Art & Literature Journal 17 February 2016



FEATURE:
Portraits





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ArtAscent

Art & Literature Journal

Showcasing outstanding
artists and writers from around the world



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Foreword and Artist Profiles

Oleksandra Osadcha is a freelance art historian and art critic living in Kharkiv, Ukraine. She earned her Master of Art degree in art history at Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts, where she is also currently researching her doctoral thesis. An active curator of art exhibitions in her hometown, Oleksandra is interested in the issues concerning visual representation of sacred motifs in contemporary art.

Art Investor Tips

Rachel Cohen received a B.A. in English from Wesleyan University in 2006 and an M.A. in Art Therapy from Pratt Institute in 2012. Currently based in Brooklyn, NY, Rachel is the founder of NA-Plabs, an art advisory service dedicated to researching and promoting work from non-traditional contexts of creation. Previously, she managed a studio and gallery for artists with developmental disabilities. Rachel is also a painter and video artist.



On The Front Cover

Surprised
by Hugo Hentoff



On The Back Cover

Blue Dots on Yellow
by Silvia Binda Heiserova



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Showcasing outstanding
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portrait

Foreword

Genre classification is helplessly relative, especially in the context of contemporary art. Yet, it's the only way to keep the dialogue between creator and public. Genres are a part of conventional language that allows art to carry on the 1,000-year-old story of Human Spirit. Portrait has always been one of the most eloquent ways to tell this story.

Portrait emerged on the certain stage of cultural development, defined by a high level of individualism in society. It would be wrong to see this genre as mere documentation of one's appearance; it's a mirror through which we're trying to perceive our own nature and destiny. Portraits have something in common with both confession and prophecy – since an attentive viewer can “read” the model's life experience from the depicted features, and, in some cases, even anticipate his or her Future. Character, fate, age, gender, physiognomy, temperament and emotion are just the veil through which we are permitted to approach the Soul of another person.

That's why portraiture was often believed to have mystical powers. For instance, in Ancient Egypt, it was connected strongly with sepulchral cult; sculptural portrait was meant to be the place, where Ka, the vital power of a person, can rest after death. Analogic notions shaped up the idea of Etruscan portrait. In succeeding epochs, despite absence of faith in portraiture's supernatural powers, it became a sign of prestige, since humans strive to beat death and leave at least a tiny trace in eternity that is permanent.

But today, when photographic tools are available to everyone, what keeps the art of portrait afloat? How do contemporary masters see individuality in the age of mass culture? These are the questions we've asked ourselves when choosing “Portraits” as a theme for this, the 17th, issue of ArtAscent Art & Literature Journal. Working with the pieces submitted by artists and writers that are featured on these pages was an amazing experience, and we're excited to share it with you!

By Oleksandra Osadcha

Jia Wang



Aphasia
Inkjet print | 17 x 22" | \$300



Artist

One rather common stereotype in mass consciousness is the image of an artist as an eccentric individual driven by some type of affliction. Though it's a huge exaggeration, there's a deal of sense in this stereotype – since art can truly be an efficient way of resiliency. This idea prompted Jia Wang to search ways to represent and rethink traumatic experiences in her photography.

Our identities are like the moon's surface covered with craters from the collisions with reality. Jia is attracted by this "roughness" of human souls, turning photographic portraiture into an instrument for visualizing her enchantment with the personal stories behind each emotional scar.

The name of the body of work the artist presents – Aphasia – is deeply symbolical. Aphasia is a neural disorder caused by damage of the vocal regions of the brain. This results in partial or complete loss of the ability to understand and/or verbalize speech. People with aphasia preserve the ability to hear sounds, but don't recognize spoken language. Doesn't that remind you of traumatized psyche, when a person seems to be detached from the surrounding with a barrier of misunderstanding and self-isolation?

To depict this state of ultimate vulnerability, the artist photographs members of her family in a very laconic, minimalistic manner: the models are pictured nude, sitting frontally or showing their back to the camera. Jia uses no specific lighting or settings for her pieces, trying to reject anything that would distract viewers' attention from the inner state of the models.

The strong emotive connection her works establishes with the audience reminds of another celebrated master of photographic portraiture - Yousuf Karsh, known for his classic portraits of the greatest people of the 20th century. And, though Jia's style is definitely less theat-

rical and spectacular than Karsh', she also follows the rule formulated by her outstanding American-Canadian predecessor: "Within every man and woman a secret is hidden, and as a photographer it is my task to reveal it if I can."

Unlike many similar series, which are often very straightforward and blatant, Jia's Aphasia is defined by tactfulness in representing the hidden side of her family members' lives. She doesn't seek to shock viewers (as there's no single hint of violence in the images) or urge them to make any hyper-philosophical conclusions. On the contrary, Jia wants us to concentrate on the empathetic side of the project, brilliantly illustrating how portraiture is able to document the impact of trauma on people throughout their lives, and how its signs can be traces in our inner "landscapes."

Jia Wang obtained her BFA in Photography from Beijing Film Academy in 2008; she continued her education and received an MFA in Imaging Arts from Rochester Institute of Technology (Rochester, NY). The artist has been actively participating in art exhibitions and festivals since 2013. Some of note include: Body 2016 in PH21 Gallery (Budapest, Hungary, 2016), Unfamiliar Asia: The Second Beijing Photo Biennial (Beijing, China, 2015), SPAS Honors Show in William Harris Gallery (Rochester, NY, 2014), Pingyao International Photography Festival (Shanxi, China, 2013) and others.

By Oleksandra Osadcha

Gold

Jia Wang

Aphasia

Inkjet print | 22 x 17" | \$300



Artist

Aphasia
Inkjet print | 17 x 22" | \$300



Jia Wang

Aphasia

Inkjet print | 17 x 22" | \$300



Artist

Aphasia
Inkjet print | 22 x 17" | \$300



Jia Wang

Aphasia

Inkjet print | 17 x 22" | \$300



Artist

Aphasia
Inkjet print | 17 x 22" | \$300



In literature, the idea of portrait became a rather vague concept denoting a whole range of things: from full-length biographies to vivid, brief descriptions of one's appearance that delineate his or her character. A young British writer Emily Raisin refers to the latter's variant, trying to compete with painting in creating bright mental imagery.

In his early novel *Hyperion: A Romance* (1839) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, wrote, "A face that had a story to tell. How different faces are in this particular! Some of them speak not. They are books in which not a line is written, save perhaps a date." And indeed, facial appearance is like a map that shows all twists and turns of our life routes. One widespread study even deducts mental character from physical appearance, called physiognomy. Rooted back in antiquity (for example, Aristotle mentioned it), physiognomy was extremely popular, especially throughout the 18th and the 19th centuries. Now it is considered just a pseudoscience, though there may be a kernel of truth in the entire theory. At least it seems easy to believe each moment of happiness and grief we went through is inscribed with wrinkles and dimples on our faces.

In her piece *Faces*, Emily gives readers an opportunity to become physiognomists. She "paints" an expressive and detailed portraiture of an unnamed person with words. Step by step, the author shapes the image of that person in our minds using a "Show, don't tell" technique. This technique, developed by such great writers of the 20th century as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, allows the reader to experience the story not through the narrative exposition and summarization, but

rather through evocative description. Emily presents every tiny detail with such convincing artistic power that we almost feel our gaze sliding across the stranger's face.

Who is that stranger? Why has he attracted the writer's attention? Is he real or not? You will be amazed by how unimportant all these questions will seem as you finish reading Emily's text. They will be overshadowed by the author's deeply humane message – forget about ubiquitous selfishness of our days and feel connection with humanity through respect of "otherness" in his or her uniqueness and diversity.

Emily Raisin is a second year history undergraduate student at the University of Warwick (Coventry, England). As a beginner in the world of creative writing, she has been trying her hand in this art just for a couple of years. Her pieces (both prose and poetry) were published in her alma mater's magazine *The Dodo*. Being passionate about writing and hoping to make it the business of her life, she is still searching for her style and shaping up her literary portfolio.

By Oleksandra Osadcha



Emily Raisin

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ArtAscent

Faces

The face before me was engaging, intriguing and completely imperfect. I'd seen it before in all its crooked glory. I'd seen it thousands of times. And so have you.

Its eyes like a refracting kaleidoscope had colours that were ever changing. In some lights they burned intensely, their amber ferocity sparked by a feeling of determination or by the person's dog-headed resolve; in others ashen grey hues would quieten the flames, leaving subdued solemnity to rest amongst the cinders. Their most wondrous asset, however, was that their grey was not dull; it was not a dead weight; a certain warmth imbued their gaze, enough warmth to create a spark amongst the coals and to allow them to burn fierce amber again.

Between the expressive eyebrows lay two gentle indents; a light folding of the skin where they had weaved together. They traced lines of concentration, of deep thought, of worry, for this person had not lived without anxiety. They had known hardship as well as they had known pleasure and happiness – as the notable wrinkles around their eyes lay testament.

Faces (cont.)

The contours of their lips equally expressed a myriad of things. In parting, the rose pink flesh allowed the world to enter with each breath, they allowed its wonders to play on their tongue and enter their soul, ultimately; they allowed the person to breathe life. Sometimes the air was bitter and unsavoury, but the acerbic taste only made the honeyed air more satisfying. Their lips had learnt so many things, transforming continuously, curving this way and that conveying empathy or dejection or endurance. They had even learnt to lie. They had learnt to stretch wide and curl like the arched back of an acrobat, pain shooting down their pink spine at the effort of having to humour their spectators. But, sometimes, they got joy from their arching performance; they revered in the audiences' applauses and laughs, and smiled spectacularly back.

Their jaw could sometimes be steel-like and rigid from obstinacy. Occasionally – even if the person knew they were being unreasonable – their jaw would constrict sternly creating a stoned wall between themselves and the truth. This person is not perfect, but for all their flaws, they remain intriguingly divine. Yes they can be steadfast, but they can also be cowardly. Their stony jaw periodically crumbles under teary trembling, but it can always be rebuilt again, because it only needs that one wilful pebble resting somewhere within them to start the construction.

In places, their skin is marked either by a scar from a painful incident or by a pigment painted by the sun's brush. In other areas, it remains youthful, soft and unlined. It has known the sea's salty waters, the snow's sting and the sun's burn. It has known the touch of both a rough and caring hand. Sensitive, it remembers the numerous paths traced by fingers young and old, and it longs for their touch again.

And what do I love most about this face and its absorbing features? What do I love most about its slightly crooked nose and the tiny, white scar near its left temple? I love that it can convey so many things. I love how its changing expressions reveal the complexity of the person beneath. I love how its lineaments reflect the world around them and simultaneously know very little of its secrets.

This face does not reflect a particular race or gender, its lips have kissed both men and women, children and adults and its eyes have looked upon every corner of the world. Its nose has breathed in scents of spices and damp grass and pine trees, and its ears have been blessed with every language and every accent. This face is engaging, intriguing and completely imperfect. I've seen it before in all its crooked glory. I've seen it thousands of times. And so have you.

This face is the face of humanity.

Jo Hay
www.johay.org



Tank Girl
Oil on canvas | 84 x 72" | \$25,000



Artist

Gender is a harmonious identification of a person as “man” or “woman.” However, human being is a complicated creature, whose self-perception can diverge from generally accepted social norms based on natural determinism. Biological sex is the result of a pure coincidence, but how can we allow chance to define norms? Jo Hay is an artist who opposes insularity of conventional wisdom in her works.

Gender clichés have been one of the central problems in the art of the recent decades. It was first articulated in the mid-1950s, when the difference between biological sex and gender was formulated for the first time. Introduction of the term “gender” removes contraposition of male/female, shifting focus to behavioral strategies shaped in this or that culture. One of the first artists who touched upon the psychological and biological perception of gender was photographer Diane Arbus: among her shots of marginalised people she portrayed “two-spirited” people (if to borrow the definition used by some Native Americans to describe transgender individuals). Jo follows Arbus, transferring the subject to the field of painting.

As the artist herself says, she is fascinated encountering situations, “when both male and female characteristics are clearly present in one person either biologically or artificially.” Her interest is rooted back in childhood, when she was attracted by the androgynous beauty of Björn Andrésen featuring Tadzio in the movie *Death in Venice* (1971). During her education in New York, Jo acquainted closer with the world of transsexuals, transvestites, and transgendered men and women. This resulted in a series of large-scale paintings depicting them.

Jo’s canvases fall out of any stylistic frames: she merges traditional shoulder-length composition with expressionistic and dynamic colouring. Liberate and wide brushwork adds eccentric vigorousness to the palette, which

is close to Pop Art. Carefully combined clean colours “mould” anatomically well-structured facial features that are smoothed with areas of almost abstract painting. The junction of figurativeness and abstractness produces the flowing effect, which organically reflects the author’s perception of the subject as something full of movement, allure and emotional charge.

Jo reveals portraiture’s ability to capture socially “inconvenient” issues in the utmost aesthetical way: the painter creates visually lush, sensual images. Moving away from any rational judgements, she asks a simple question – “Is this beautiful?”, and thus all prejudices are eliminated with the power of artistic vision.

Jo Hay was born in 1964 in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Middlesex University, London, in 1986. In the 1990s, she moved to New York where she attended Art Students League (1994 - 1996) and later received her MFA in Painting from the New York Academy of Art (2012). The artist was a recipient of several scholarships: New York Academy of Art Portrait Scholarship (2011) and The Lillian Orlowsky and William Freed Foundation Grant (2010). Additionally, her work was included in numerous solo, group and juried shows and was selected as a finalist in Madonna’s #ARTFORFREEDOM competition (2013), semi-final of the annual BP Portrait Award (2015) and others.

By Oleksandra Osadcha

Silver

Jo Hay

Dodger

Oil on canvas | 84 x 72" | \$25,000

RIGHT PAGE: Shania

Oil on canvas | 96 x 72" | \$25,000





Bernel Leibovici

www.flickr.com/photos/bernel/albums



Marat



Artist

Integrity of the world is real, yet hardly perceptible. Cognition of life and its representation in art is also integral. Rationalism, cultivated with all its advantages and failures in the gnoseological theories of contemporary history, is gradually replaced with understanding of the complexity of perception and thinking. Bernel Leibovici is one of the artists who embodies this new attitude toward reality in his works.

Bernel has become acquainted with photography comparatively recently. Entering the world of fine art with solid life experience allowed him to achieve a certain level of creative maturity rather quickly. The photographer doesn't limit himself in the thematic range of his pieces, experimenting in various genres – from still life to landscape and even abstract montage compositions. Portraiture also occupies a significant place in his creative endeavors, demonstrating all crucial principals of Bernel's artistic method.

A famous neurologist and author of numerous books about enigma of human brain, Oliver Sacks, noted, "Every act of perception, is to some degree an act of creation, and every act of memory is to some degree an act of imagination." Amazement with the possibility of our brain to reveal the plentitude of life inspired various masters of the 20th and the 21st century, like Wassily Kandinsky and David Hockney, to embody synesthesia in their works. Bernel inherited this idea: he agrees we shape the image of any person using not only visual information, but other senses, thus he transforms his camera into the tool for capturing impressions from people he encounters in the most tangible way.

In his portraits, the artist actively applies post-processing, adding details, amplifying textures and colours. These alterations refer to various feelings (from sound to smell), revealing a new, virtual, third-dimension of the pictures: as the artist states, talking about his pieces, he "would like that the visitor had apprehend them with all their senses - to hear the cry of Michael, to smell the blood of Marat." As such, Bernel's photographs are free from glamorous sugariness and lyricism: they are full of "asperities" that catch the eye and force viewers to go deeper in search of the lurking beauty.

Bernel Leibovici started his career as a photographer in 2007, previously working as an electronics engineer. Along with refining his skills in digital art, he took a course of Chinese brush painting and calligraphy with Master Kazuo Ishi that expanded his knowledge of other aesthetic approaches and practices. Bernel has been participating in international juried exhibitions (under the patronage of FIAP and PSA) since 2011. His works were demonstrated at numerous shows in Serbia, Croatia, Ireland, Montenegro and Singapore. His first two solo exhibitions took place at Auditorium Gallery in Haifa, Israel (Photo-Graphies, 2012) and at Nagler Centre, at Beit Nagler in Qiriat Haym, Israel (Spirit & Spaces, 2013).

By Oleksandra Osadcha



Artist

Bernel Leibovici

LEFT PAGE: Lavieenrose

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ArtAscent

Michael





Artist

Bernel Leibovici

LEFT PAGE: Field Portrait

Old Woman



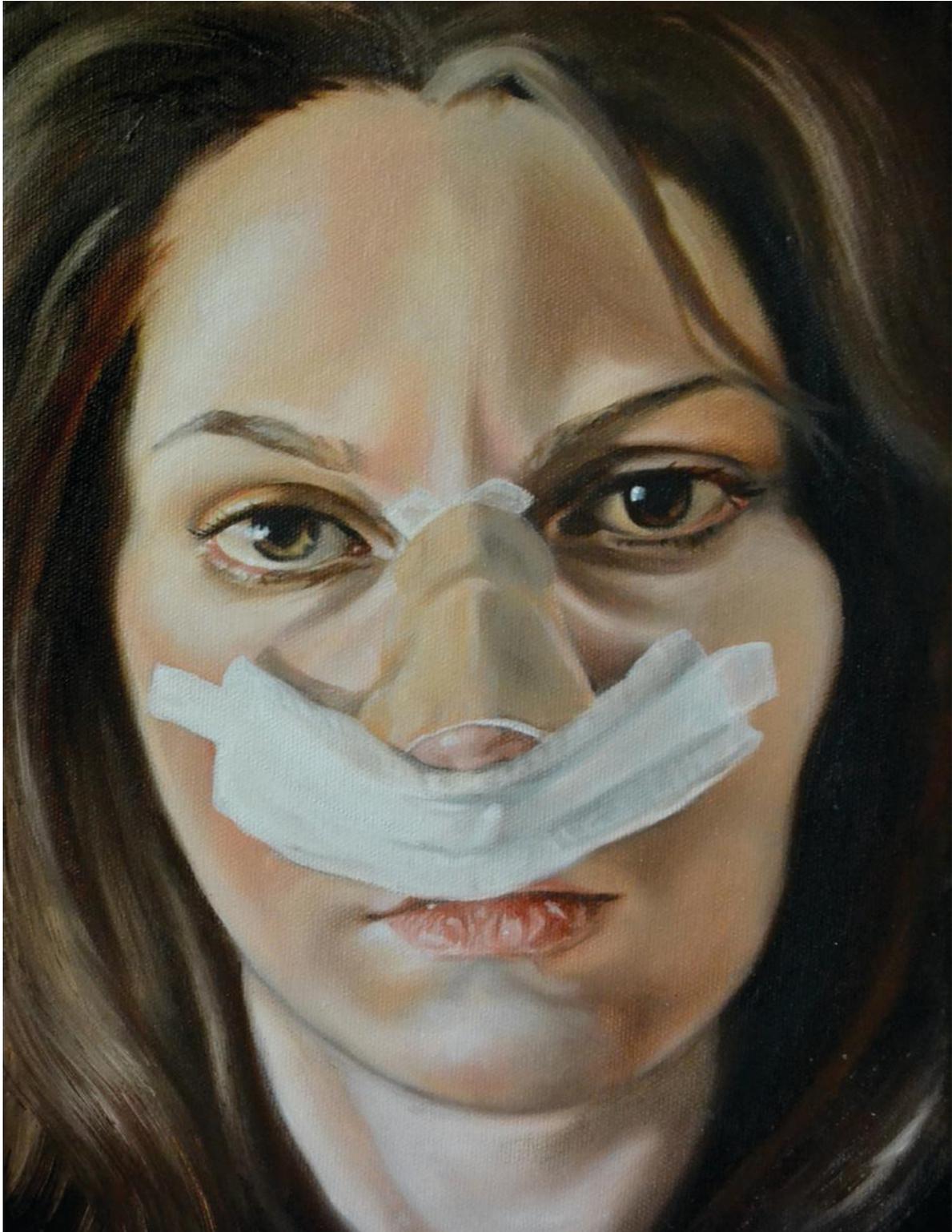


Rhinoplasty

Oil on canvas | 10 x 12" | \$140

RIGHT PAGE: Camo III

Oil on canvas paper | 16 x 12" | NFS







Silhouette of Sleep

Knowing eyes
Search a familiar face
Retracing well-known lines
Wrinkles tell a secret story
Only two can read.

Noses bump
As lovers embrace
Seeking comfort
From the world.
Quiet breaths fill the air
Punctuating moments of silence.
Stillness settles as eyelids slide shut
Sealing silhouettes in the land of dreams.
Time grows lethargic
Between exhales.

A lasting gaze
Communicating love
Between a series of blinks
Pupils become a mirror
Reflecting life.

There are no words
Yet the silence still finds a voice
Softly speaking of an affection built by trust

Lips part as gentle bodies enter a deep sleep
Freed from a world of responsibilities
By a peaceful slumber.



Deborah Dendler

www.deborahdendler.com

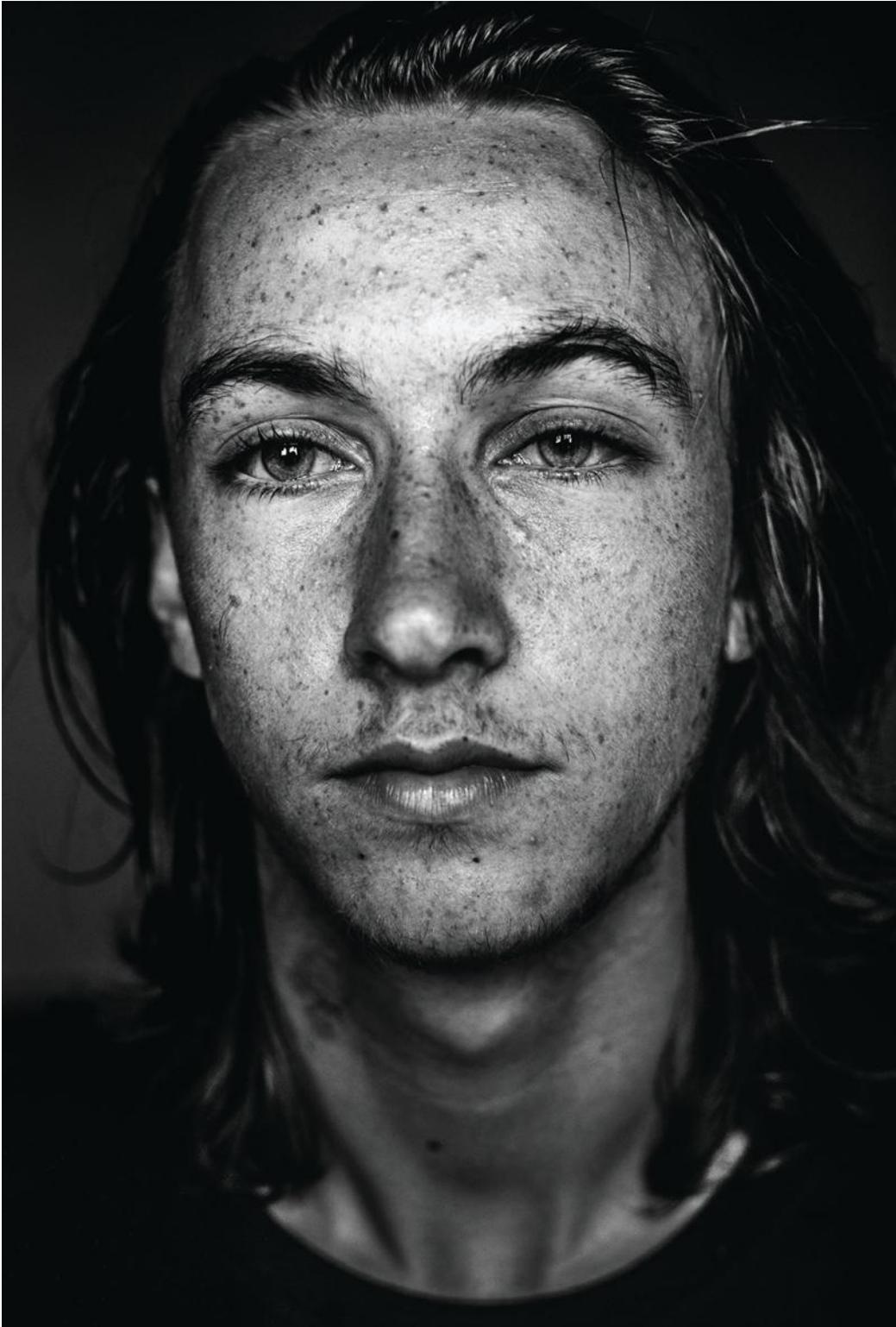
American Woman
Mixed media (plaster, metal, paper, paint) | 24 x 12 x 9" | \$4,000





Allergies

Giclee photographic print on Hahnemuhle Pearl photo rag paper | 15.5 x 23" | \$300



Nat

Giclee photographic print on Hahnemuhle Pearl photo rag paper | 24 x 16" | \$300



NEXT SPREAD: Faces

Giclee photographic print on on Hahnemuhle Pearl photo rag paper | 17 x 12" | \$300

FOLLOWING SPREAD: Paul Frankowitz

Giclee photographic print on on Hahnemuhle Pearl photo rag paper | 24 x 16" | \$300











Speakcursive
Digital photography | 16.427 x 10.88" | \$160



Lanky Lennt
Digital photography | 16.427 x 18.88" | \$160





Reincarnation

Like a butterfly emerging from the safe and secure confines of her chrysalis, the transformation Lilli had undergone in the past three years was complete, and she emerged stronger and more vibrant than anyone could have imagined.

Her routine had become so predictable that it was automatic. Each morning, she woke close to 11 a.m. after yet another restless night's sleep. This morning was no different. As had been her pattern for the past few years, she woke disheartened by another day. Checking her phone, which was secured in its usual place under her pillow, she looked for any messages she may have received in the few hours she had been asleep. Once again, she was disappointed to discover it remained quiet and unblinking. She wondered why she still hoped in vain that someone would leave a message, particularly when she considered the heightened anxiety she would likely feel when expected to respond. She had gradually isolated herself from all former friends, and her network had been reduced to the two members of her immediate family. She felt trapped in the cycle of her own isolation.

Rolling onto her side, preparing to climb out of bed, she was surprised by the unusual lightness she felt. She had been expecting the predictable heaviness of her body and fatigued muscles that she usually felt. It was with the faintest spark of interest that she tenderly placed her feet on the ground and felt the soft comforting texture of the carpet beneath them. With a moment's pause, she listened to the slightest increase in her breathing and quickening of her heartbeat. Brushing her unruly curls from her eyes, she stood and took the three steps required to reach her dressing table. Before she could take her regular seat and begin her grooming ritual, Lilli froze. The reflection of the young woman staring back at her was barely recognizable.

She wondered fleetingly if she was still sleeping. Though, as she continued to watch, she began to discern the subtle similarities between the girl in the mirror and the girl whose body she inhabited. The shadows that had been permanent fixtures below her flat inexpressive eyes had been replaced by the warm glow of now rose-tinted cheeks and golden skin. Her former frailty, evident in the delicate translucence of her skin, a result of hours spent indoors and shrouded in darkness, had become stronger over time and no longer bore the markings of a tortured soul. The warmth of her blood and the vital energy that flows through her veins, now reflect her renewed lease on life. She watched in awed fascination by the subtle changes of her features.

Her room remained immersed in darkness from the secured blinds, closed doors and heavy curtains, and for the first time in as long as she could remember, she craved sunlight. Sweeping the curtains aside and raising the blinds, Lilli was overwhelmed by the stark contrast of the world around her; once shadowy and foreboding, masking secrets of her painful past, now shone with vibrancy she hadn't known. With time, she had healed from the emotional wounds inflicted upon her youthful innocence. She wondered what had changed so dramatically within her to evoke the changes she now saw in herself. Her topaz eyes drank in the colours around her like a hungry tiger keenly fascinated by her ignorant prey. The world around her seemed different, renewed and fascinating. She didn't want to miss another moment, wanting to catch up on lost time and experiences missed. She wanted to embrace every element of life, and it was following this thought that she answered her own question. Hope. What had changed was that although she thought it had been lost completely, she had somehow, over time and through battling her own demons, reignited a sense of hope.

Like the butterfly, once emerged, she knew with a resounding certainty that she would never be able to return to confines her chrysalis. She was free.

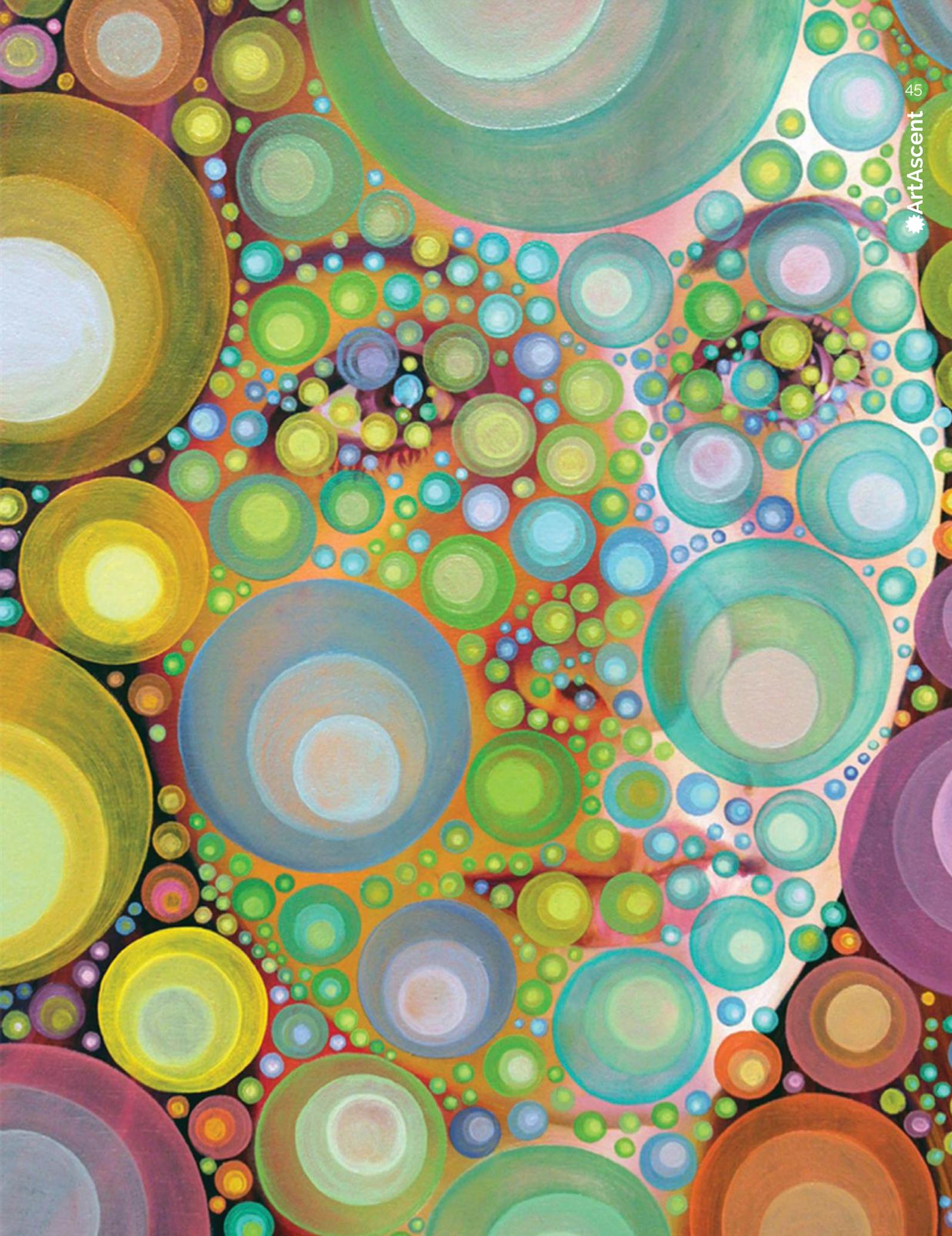
Whitney Trisler Causey



The Veil
Oil on wood panel | 24 x 36 x 2" | NFS

RIGHT PAGE: The Time in Perception
Oil on wood panel | 12 x 16 x 2" | NFS





Nina Chung

www.alchemyofspirit.net



Cold Breath of Spirit
Photography | 11 x 17" | \$175



Alchemy of Spirit
Photography | 11 x 13" | \$150



R.A. Vander Klay

www.anneclyfineart.com



Don't Rain on My Parade

Photography on vinyl | 48 x 72" | \$500



Married
Photography on vinyl | 48 x72" | \$500





Spirit of Sorrow
Giclee on canvas | 20 x 14" | \$300

RIGHT PAGE: The Masque
Giclee on canvas | 14 x 20" | \$300







Sally in Pose
Digital photograph

RIGHT PAGE: Portrait of Sally
Digital photograph







Pieces of Me
UltraChrome ink on ultra premium luster | 12 x 12" | \$125



Sludge
UltraChrome ink on ultra premium luster | 8 x 10" | \$150





Am I Still A Girl?

Ten days pass behind her
Free the cloud of doom
Awaken brute vitality
Whispered back on cue
Distant shifting closer
Is that really you?
Who's that girl so frail and meek?
Who's that woman, incomplete?
Upright standing
On her feet
Not this woman
Not defeat.



Nicole Y. Serjeant
www.facebook.com/nicoleserjeant

Self Portrait - Am I Still a Girl?
Digital photography | 11.69 x 16.54" | NFS



Silvia Binda Heiserova

www.silviaheiserova.com

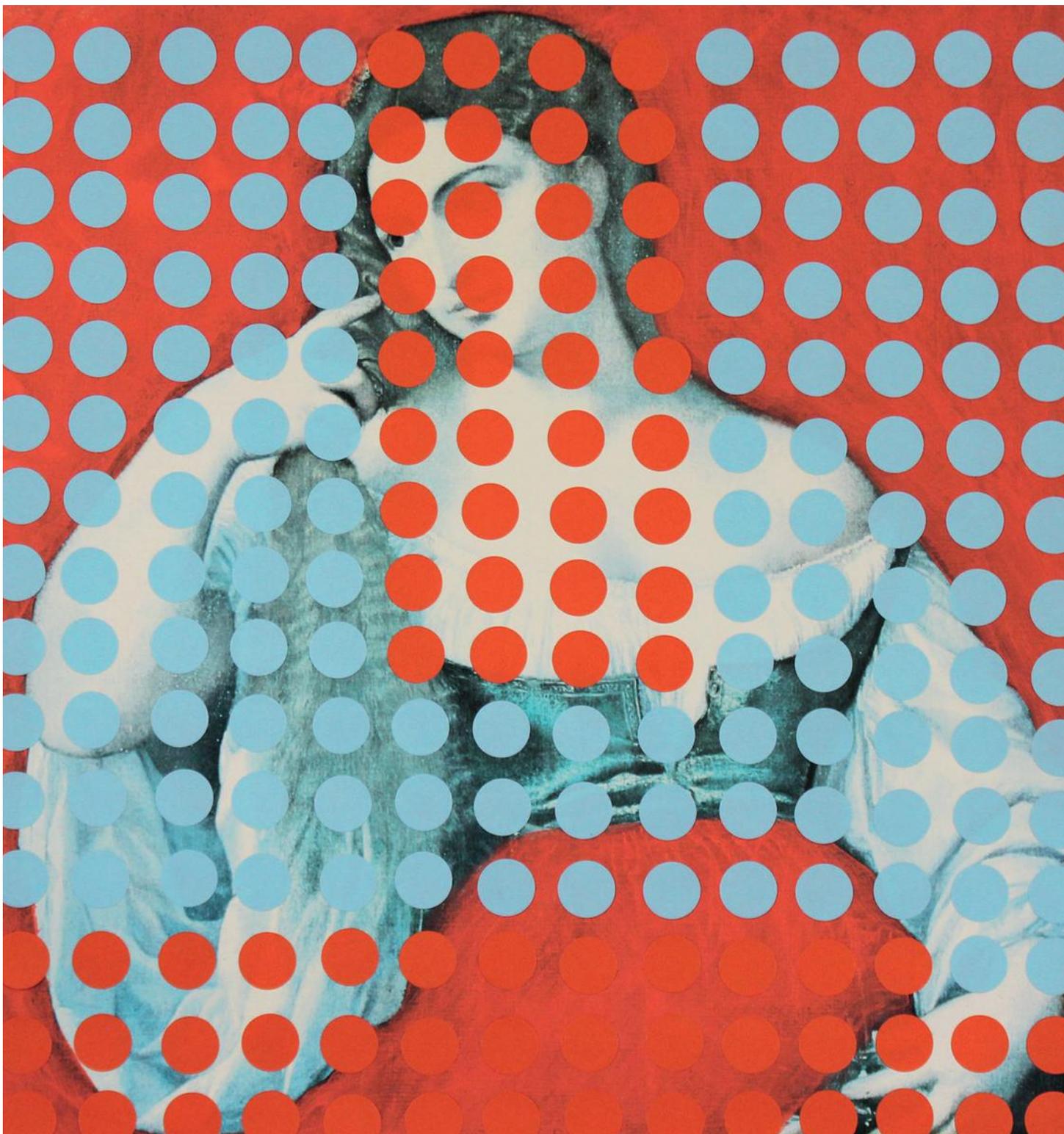


Blue Dots on Pink

Acrylic and adhesive paper on printed cardboard | 9 x 12" | \$400



Blue and Red Dots on Red
Acrylic and adhesive paper on printed cardboard | 11 x 12" | \$400



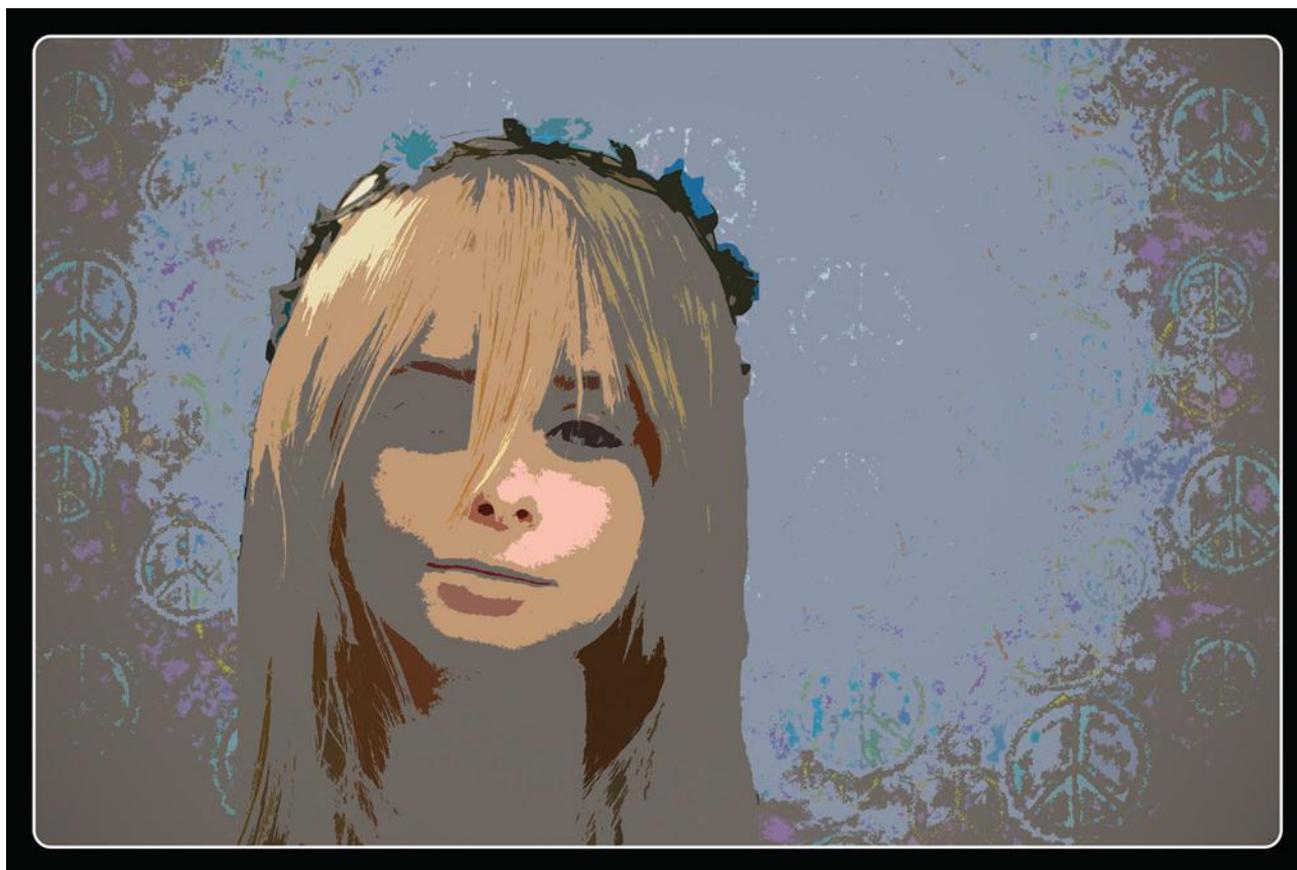
Chuck Fletcher

www.beonfilm.com

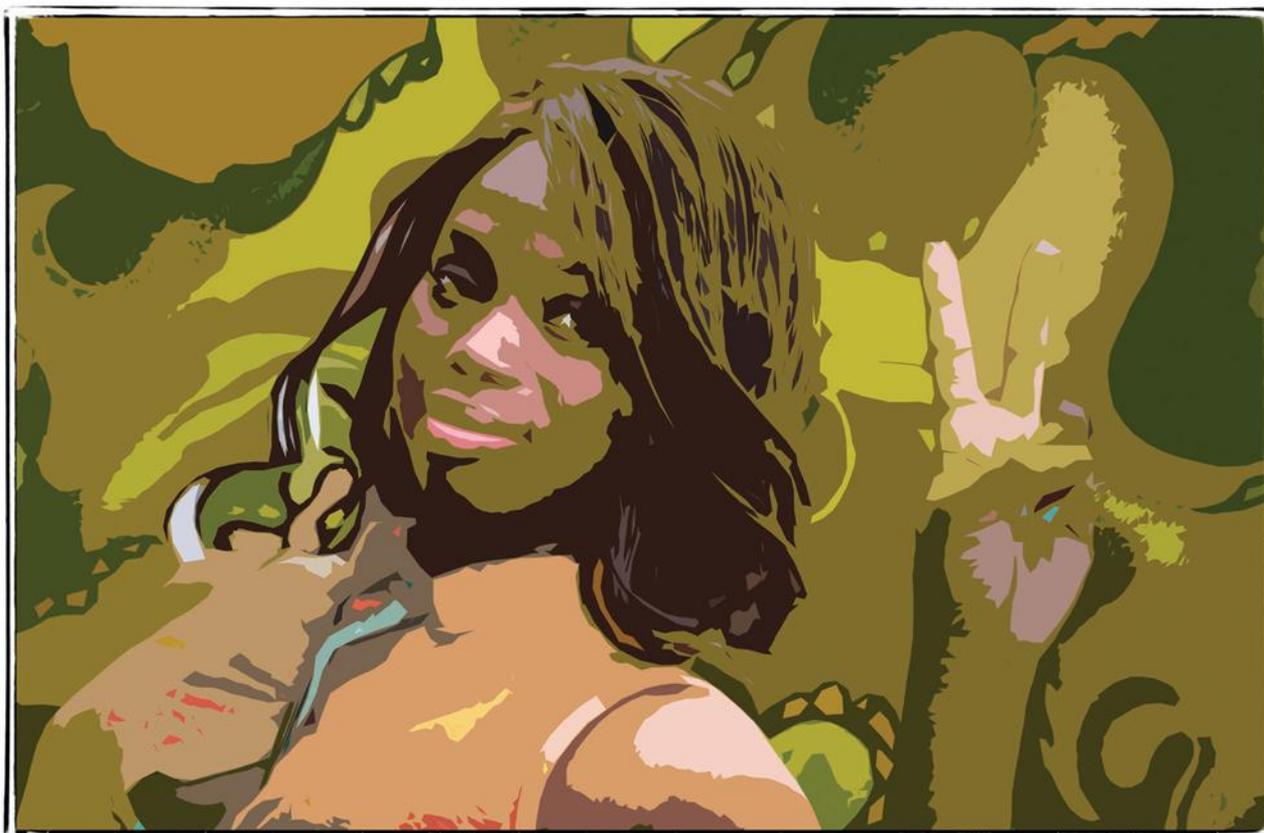


My Peace

Digital print archival ink on Hahnemuhle Bamboo Fibre mounted on gatorboard | 12 x 18" | \$1,800

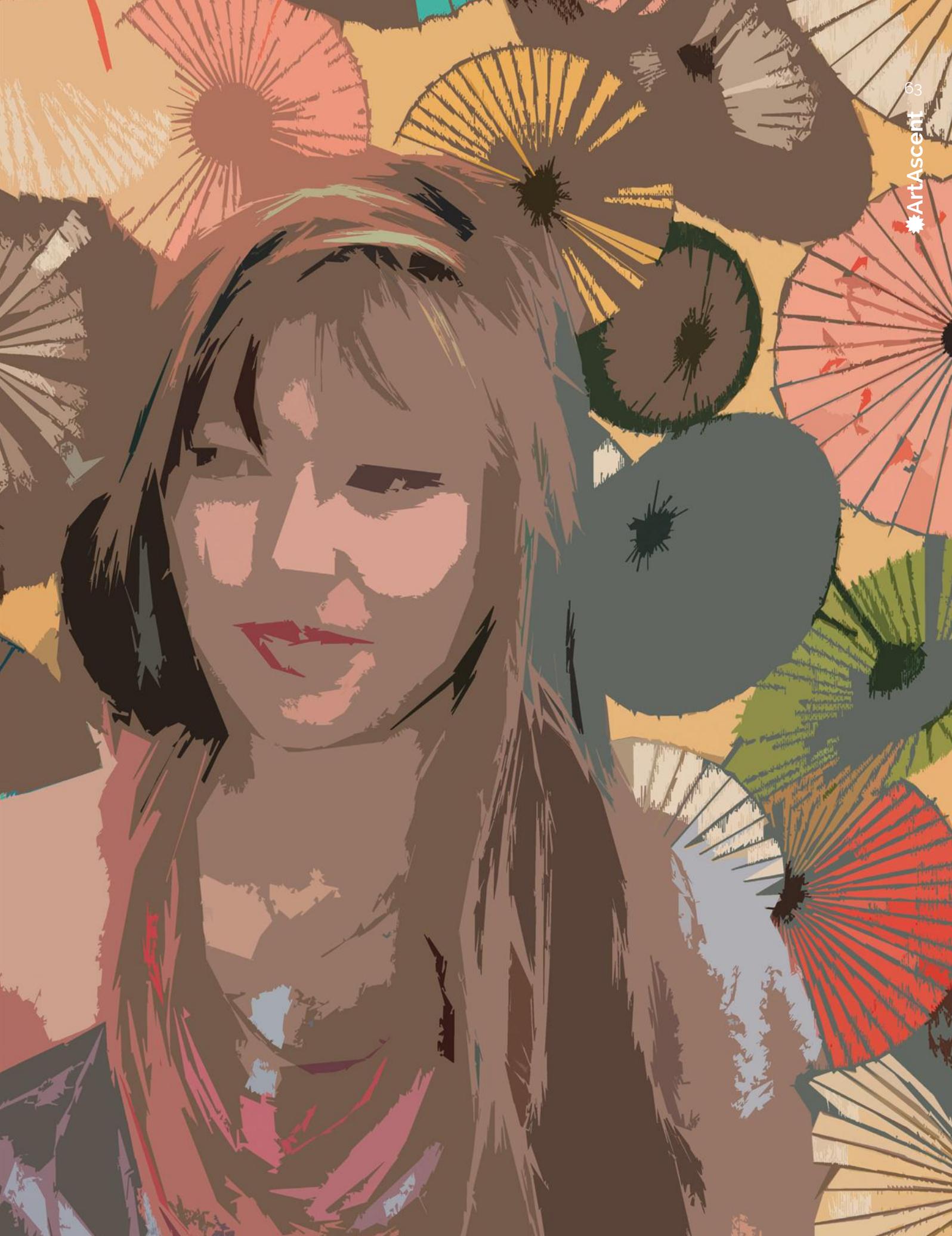


Kodachrome Victory
Digital print archival ink on Hahnemuhle Bamboo Fibre mounted on gatorboard | 12 x 18" | \$1,800



NEXT SPREAD: Asian Rain
Digital print archival ink on Hahnemuhle Bamboo Fibre
mounted on gatorboard | 12 x 18" | \$1,800







Presence

Charcoal and PanPastel on paper | 30 x 32" | NFS



Ned
Charcoal and PanPastel on paper | 38 x 29" | \$750





Buskers

He is a piano,
not grand,
but always upright

He can harmonise
with other instruments
when required,
but after a while
their decibels drain
and drown out
his sound
to soft playing

Solo performances
provide disambiguation -
keys are letters
notes are words
chords are sentences
rhythms are verses
forming instrumentals
that tell stories
to small audiences
of being his own
composer,
never submitting
to a conductor's baton

She is a violin
her bow always
restlessly leaning
and waiting
for another
instrument's prompt

When mid-range notes
are required
a string breaks
and others
need tuning

Her strings
tightly wound
produce highs and lows,
dramatic,
and in full control
dreaming
of busily buzzing
amidst an orchestra

And the buskers played on...



Devon Govoni
www.devongovoni.wix.com/artist

Alone at the Top
Mixed media on Masonite | 16 x 24 x 0.25" | \$6,500



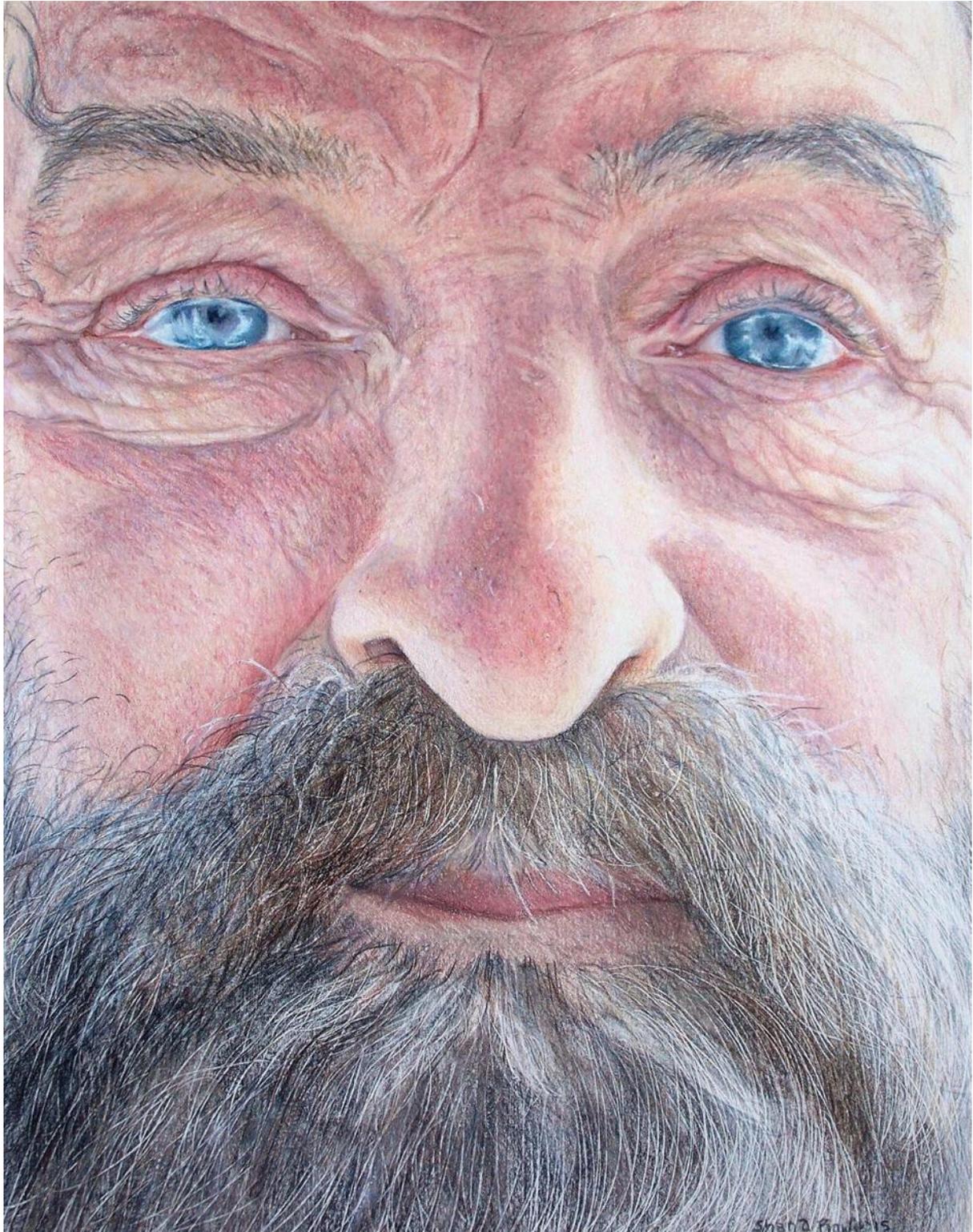


As He Ages

Colored pencil on paper | 11 x 14" | NFS

RIGHT PAGE: Just Me

Colored pencil on paper | 11 x 14" | NFS





Shana Rowan 15

Eric Thompson

www.ericthompson.ca



Patagonia

Chromogenic print | 20 x 24 x 2" | \$3,500



Shea
Chromogenic print | 20 x 24 x 2" | \$3,500

NEXT SPREAD: Brian
Chromogenic print | 20 x 24 x 2" | \$3,500







Eric Thompson

Rick

Chromogenic print | 20 x 24 x 2" | \$3,500



Cassandra
Chromogenic print | 20 x 24 x 2" | \$3,500





Collage

My portrait is a multi-faceted collage. There is my actual facial aspect, the one that looks back at me from the mirror and from photographs. This is my initial impression to others. But, I have many more dimensions. I am so much more than that. That is only one of my faces.

Objectively, I see someone who will never be mistaken for Miss America. My head is too small, my ears too prominent. I tend to see the flaws, but, mostly, I look to make sure that the countenance I present to the world does not have a face full of food or teeth dyed with lipstick.

My face links me to my family, to present and past generations. Predominantly, I see my father's face; a reminder of his smile, which I associate with his sense of humour. There are traces of my mother in my mouth. Through this face, others can see clues to my nationality, the combination of German and Scottish traits.

I am the face that my best friend sees. She looks beyond my bad-hair days to see the times I have helped her, the kindness I feel for her, the compassion in her difficult times and the celebration of the good times. She overlooks the temporary grimace of a stressful day to see the person she has known for years.

To those who dislike me, my bad features can be magnified and misinterpreted. They see a snarl where I intend a smile or a chuckle. They perceive my pre-occupation with the day's events not as thoughtfulness, but as indifference.

Strangers may get only a glimpse of me as they pass by. What is their snapshot impression of me? Are they

reacting to momentary emotions? Do they see character? Do I seem to be an honest person? Do I seem likable? Am I approachable? Do they even notice me? To some degree, my face is a Rorschach test onto which they project their own feelings. Those who are angry and pessimistic see these traits in others. Those who are pleasant and optimistic assume others are of a like disposition.

There is the way I see myself, not as my chronological age but as the youthful person I still feel inside. The calendar may see me as middle-aged, but I still have the same dreams and fears as the young girl who moved out on her own and forged a life separate from that of her parents. I am the total of a lifetime of actions, the composite of my interactions with others that have formed my personality, my likes and dislikes.

My portrait is an ever-changing aspect on the outside, protecting a consistent package within. There is a certain plasticity, though, that allows me to change my outward appearance to fit the situation. I can be flirtatious with an arch of the eyebrow or a wink when an attractive man walks by. I can seem rushed when approached by someone who wants to sell me a magazine or a religion.

My portrait is the culmination of my life. The joys are present in the crinkles around me eyes. The worries etched into the furrow in my brow. I have earned the expression on my face. It shows the determination, the patience and the happiness that are part of my underlying character. I can only hope that others see that as well.



Ashley VanGemerem
www.ashleyvangemerem.com

Well I Don't Need to be Repotted but Watered
Sewing thread, ink, wax, eyeshadow, paper and tape on repurposed matte board | 12 x 14" | \$200





Attachment

Oil on canvas | 45 x 35 x 1.25" | NFS

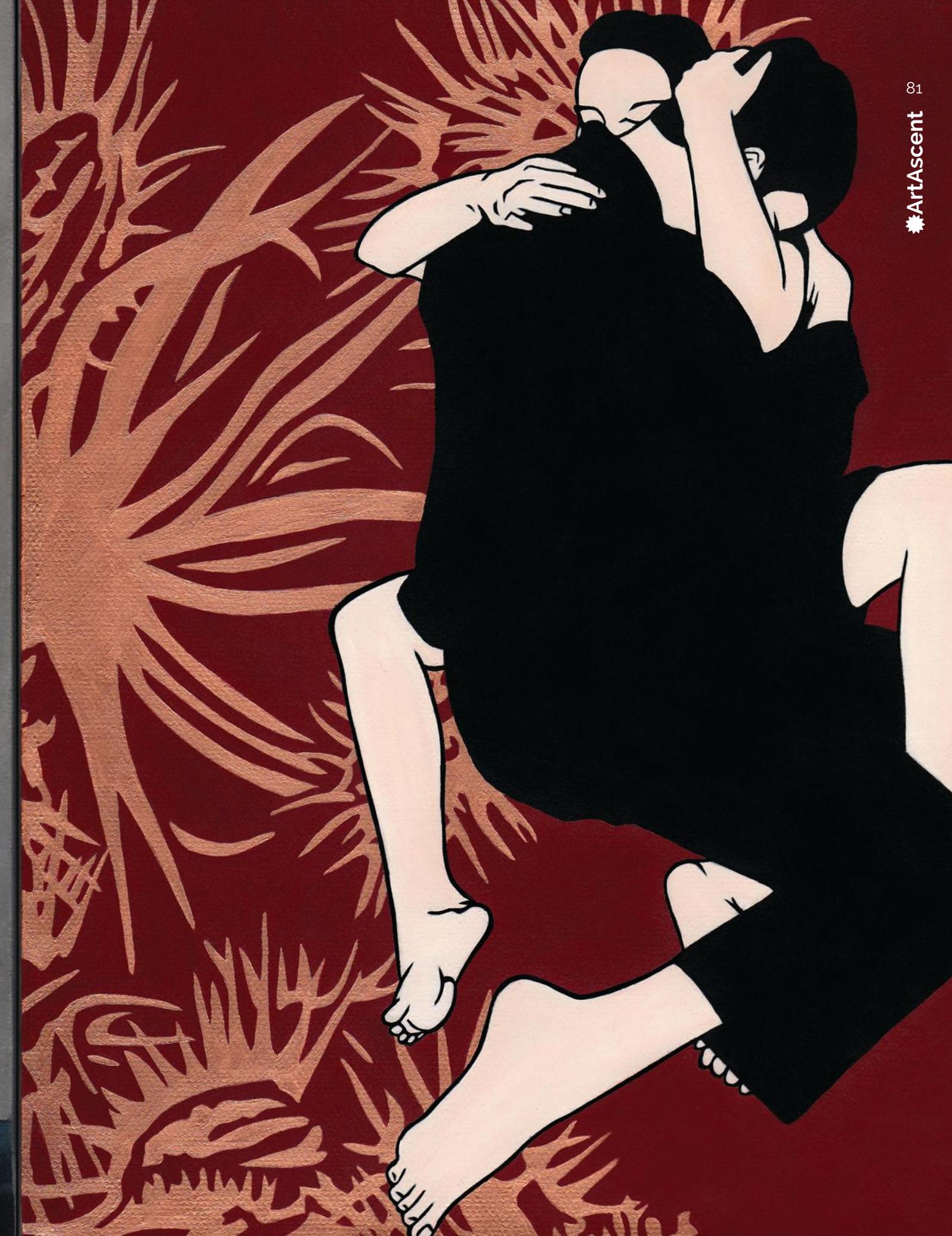


Bread
Oil on canvas, diptych | 10 x 16 x 0.75" | NFS



NEXT SPREAD: Inner Self
Oil on canvas, diptych | 10 x 16 x 0.75" | NFS





Sooo-z Mastropietro

www.mastropiece.com

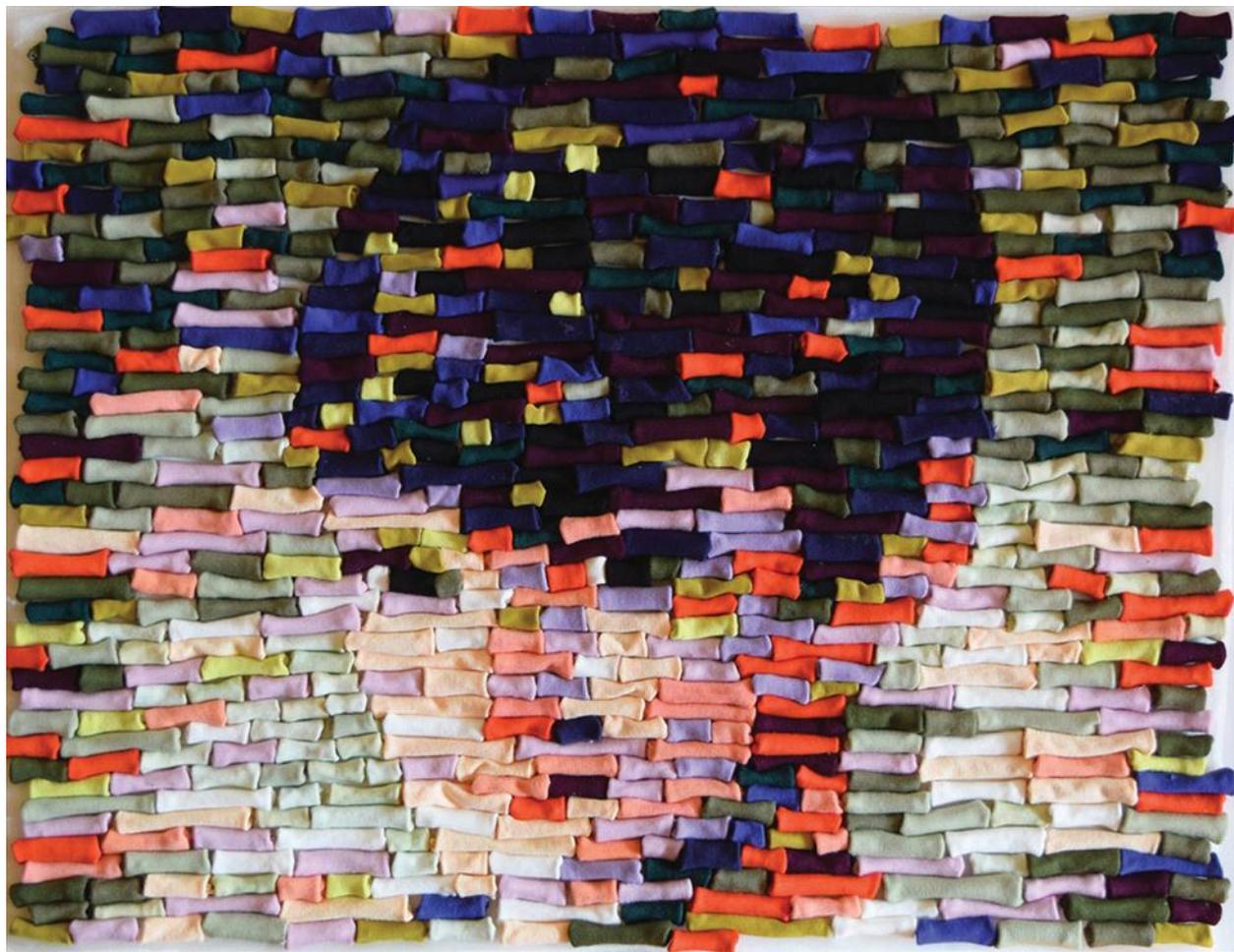


Mo

Fiber | 16 x 20 x 2" | \$1,550



Montster
Fiber | 16 x 20 x 2" | \$1,550



Sabin Chintoan

www.facebook.com/sabinchintoan.streetpainting



Discovering New Dimensions
Acrylic on canvas | \$900



Fear of Her Self
Acrylic on canvas | \$800



Kirsty Turner

www.etsy.com/uk/shop/KirstyTPortraits



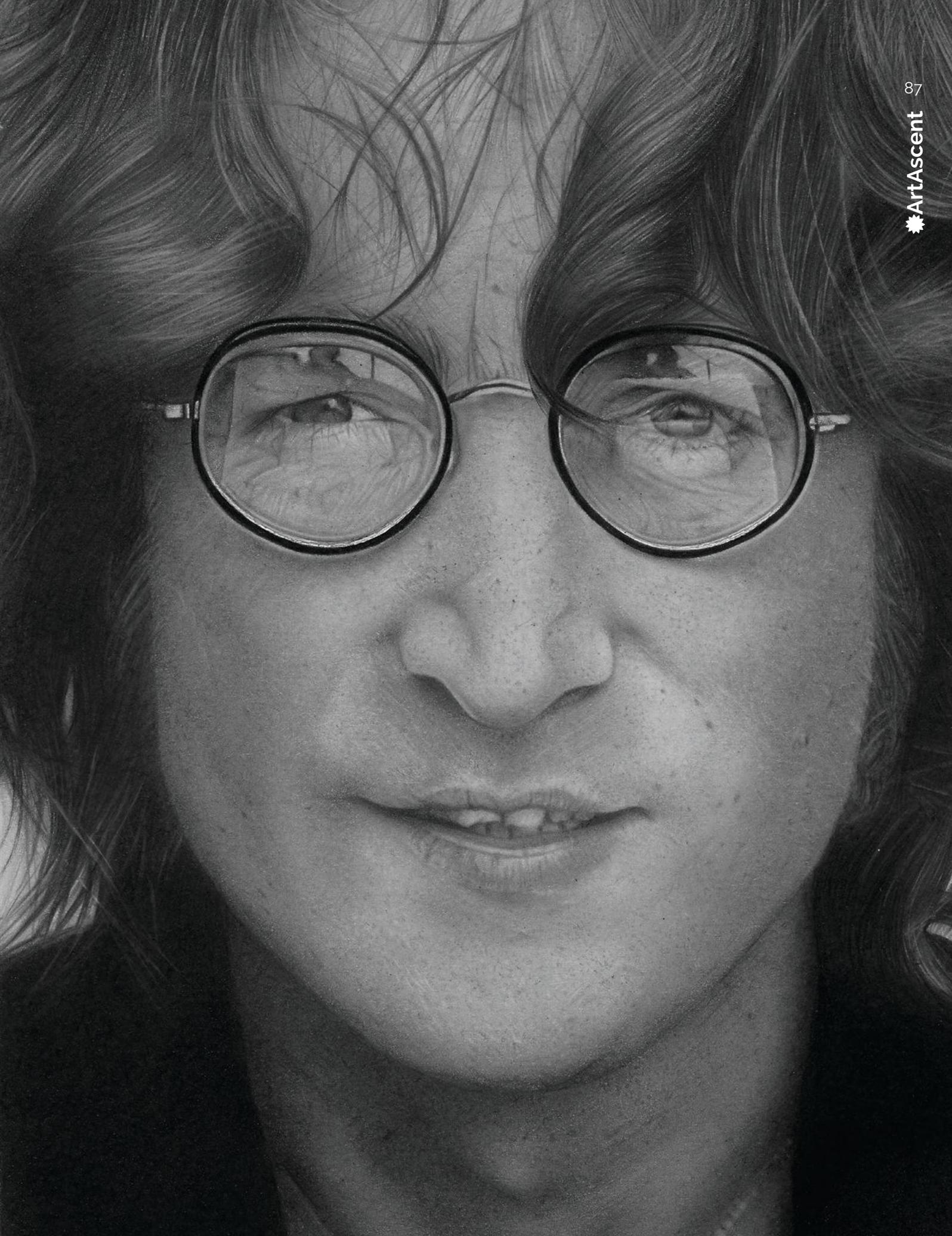
Celebrity Skin

Graphite pencil on smooth Bristol board | 8 x 10" | \$450

RIGHT PAGE: Nowhere Boy

Graphite pencil on smooth Bristol board | 7 x 9" | \$450







Untitled 1

Oil on canvas | 11 x 14" | \$400



Untitled 3
Oil on canvas | 11 x 14" | SOLD



Josie Van Ryn

Untitled 4

Oil on canvas | 18 x 20" | \$600



Untitled 5
Oil on canvas | 20 x 24" | \$700



Josie Van Ryn

Untitled 8

Oil on canvas | 11 x 14" | \$400



Untitled 7
Oil on canvas | 20 x 24" | \$700





Untitled

Stoneware, acrylic paint, pastel, feathers | 18 x 13 x 20" | NFS





Plugging

My constitution is
a collage: a lifetime
spent rubbing down the sharpest
corners of foreign objects

and stuffing them into
various holes in and across
my body.

Once in place, my skin
overtakes the implants,
crawling throughout and consuming
them: prep work for insertion
into the system.

Regardless of origin,
I fit them in; they
are mine now.



Free Spirit

Acrylic on canvas | 18 x 24" | \$435





Rhonda Hodge

www.bluethumb.com.au/rhonda-hodge

Joi©

Soft pastel on heavy card | 15.28 x 11.59" | NFS





Going Grey

Digital photography by Charles G. Wilbur | 10 x 8" | NFS



Self Portrait Age 6
Crayon on paper | 12 x 18" | NFS



Studio Spotlight

Surrounding myself with art

I eat, live and breathe art. I've been a high school art teacher for more than 10 years; before that I was a graphic designer/freelance artist. I teach art, create art and collect art.

My entire house is filled with art: paintings and sculpture are in every corner, wall and even on the ceiling of my home. I have a large collection from fellow artists, friends, masters and mentors from all over the world. I surround myself with art that I love to be continuously inspired. I have some Syd Solomon paintings, a small Picasso drawing, a Jack Dowd sculpture of Andy Warhol along with so many delightful pieces that I have collected over the years. My most precious is that from my friend and mentor, Philippe Valy from France. Art runs through my veins and I am constantly drawing, painting or creating a sculpture.

Visit www.facebook.com/AnitaWexlerArtist and www.anitawexler.com.

By Anita Wexler





Art Investor Tips

Alternative markets: An introduction to art brut and self-taught art

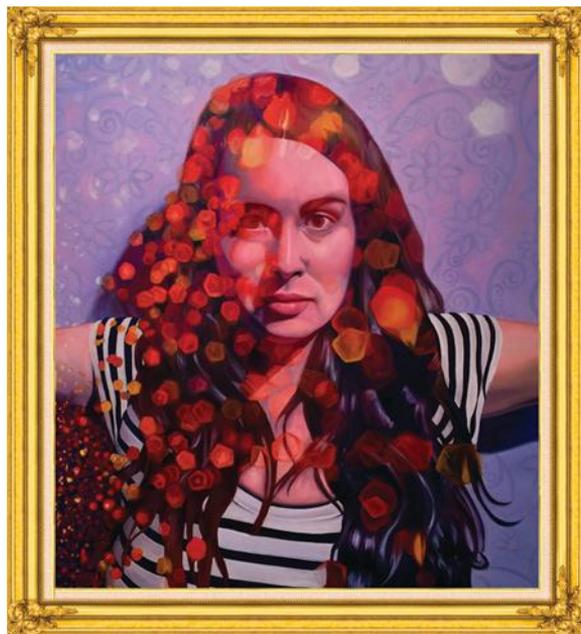
These days, it seems everyone is talking about the art market, as celebrities try their hands as curators and even past political figures put paint to canvas. From the staggering auction prices to the on-going social to-dos of the art fair, the art market has created a verifiable social subset and cultural scene.

However, as prices continue to soar, more and more people are looking to alternative art markets to acquire original art from notable artists at prices that are more attainable (a relative term if ever there was one). Some markets focus specifically on one medium, such as prints and reproductions, while others, like the art brut or outsider art market, are defined by the context in which the works are created.

Art brut, or outsider art as it was presented to the American market in Roger Cardinal's seminal 1972 work, has long been celebrated in Europe, but has become much more popular in recent years in Asia and North America as an emerging market, both as a subset of contemporary and modern art and as a category within itself. It is typically defined as the artwork of individual creators who are removed from mainstream society and traditional art influences, such as individuals with mental illness or those who are imprisoned.

Folk art, while often being grouped under the outsider umbrella, has a bit more of a history as an established market. Different regions around the world have tangible objects that represent a socio-cultural history, whether they are sold to tourists as trinkets or collected in major museums. However, scholars in both folk art and art brut are quick to distinguish what actually differentiates the two on a technical level; folk art is intrinsically tied to an audience and the inherited processes of a community, whereas the outsider artist is celebrated for his or her individual process of creation, unique to his or her idiosyncrasies.

While certain examples of regional folk art have been demoted to kitsch, there has been a move in the last century to incorporate this artwork under a fine art umbrella. Starting in the early 20th century, modern artists looked to "primitive" forms of artwork found in regions considered "tribal," but the surrealists were really the first major group of art historical figures to champion art brut.



In some ways, surrealism is known for its distortions and otherworldly representation, but the surrealists were actively looking to represent an inner man, and turned to psychoanalysis and psychiatry as fields for inspiration. While not associated with surrealism, Jean Dubuffet was a contemporary and friend to many of the most notable artists of the time, and it was through them that he became aware of art being created in psychiatric institutions.

For the rest of his life and career, Dubuffet devoted his efforts to collecting and promoting artists living in institutions from all over Europe, and he established the Collection de l'Art Brut, which is currently located in Laussane, Switzerland, and remains the preeminent resource for art brut.

It makes sense then, that in some markets, the work of patients or eccentrics that inspired modern and surreal artists is now being featured alongside those works both in exhibitions and in auction houses. As prices continue to rise for modern masters, there is a definite move toward finding alternatives for both investment purposes and to acquire original work. Auction houses around the world, from Christie's in New York to Tajan in Paris, now feature some of the best examples of art brut, both in dedicated sales and in larger regional or modern sales. This work continues to hold appeal both for its raw nature and for its expression of unfettered creativity.

By Rachel Cohen, LCAT, ATR-BC

Pictured above (frame excluded):
A Little Glitter Never Hurt
by Whitney Trisler Causey

Artists Talk

What are your favourite tools/techniques from 2015?

The mirror effect in my Olympus TG-4. It's something I never thought I would use; but, my illusionistic work has reached new levels. – Jim Baab
www.jimbaab.com

Flash fiction limited to as few as 250 words. This challenge has honed many skills in ways I didn't anticipate. I always wrote, although traumatic life events caused me to abandon serious writing and reading intermittently for eight years. I had to live to write. But reading is still paramount. – Jeff Stone
www.jeffstonewords.wordpress.com

Charcoal and crayon mixed with acrylic. Another favorite was to glaze my collage work with coffee. – Ingela

I painted more detailed backgrounds, including landscapes – something I used to hate! I started watching Bob Ross online, and I found his techniques super helpful. – Morgan Ryan
www.facebook.com/morgan.ryan.art

Photoshop, Epson scanner and Canon camera. – Carel Schmidtkofer
www.saatchiart.com/carel

I unearthed my love for life-drawing in charcoal, graphite, and ink. I was surprised, as I'd always seen myself as a "colour- and-paint landscapes" sort of a girl! – Dr Donna McDonald
www.donnamcdonald.com

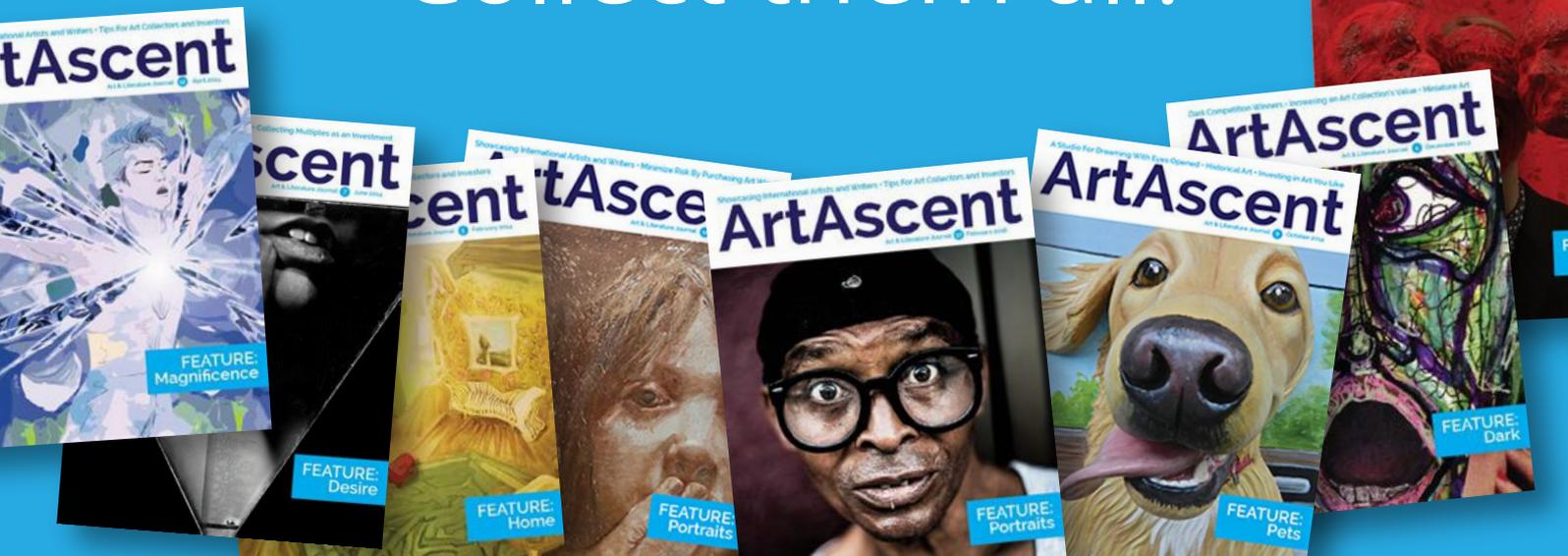
I was working on a number of different Oriental syllabic count forms, including the Imayo, the Sedoka, and the Sijo. They provide structures for my word thoughts, stories, and dreams that European forms don't. – David Hughey

View more conversations and meet the artists on the ArtAscent Facebook page.



www.facebook.com/ArtAscent

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Next issue theme feature: **Heat**

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Share your realistic, symbolic, abstract, or other creative vision
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