

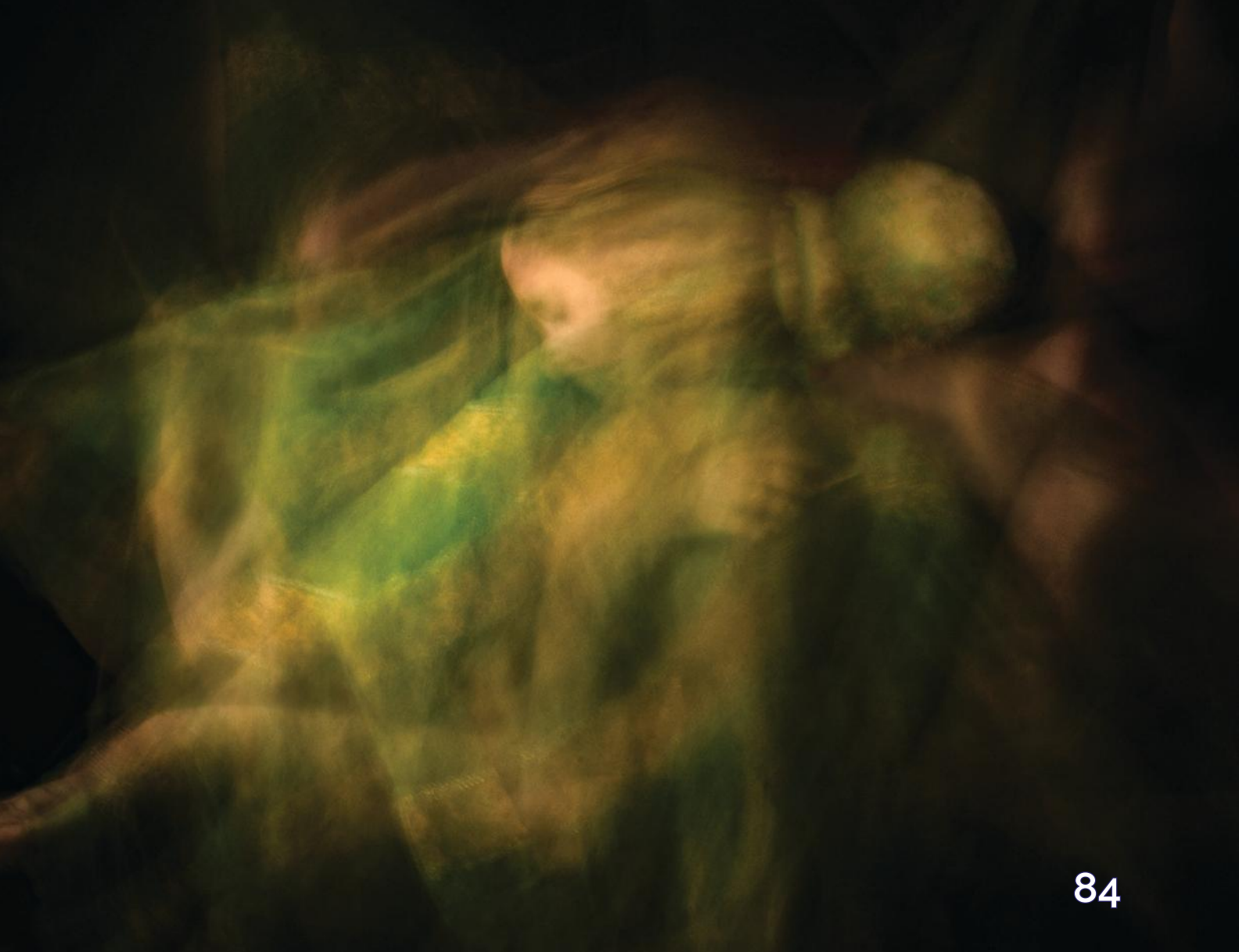
Showcasing International Artists and Writers • Interview with Artist Andrew Norris

ArtAscent

Art & Literature Journal 27 October 2017



FEATURE:
Lost





78

Contents

6 FOREWORD

8 FEATURE

Lost

Outstanding artists and writers of this ArtAscent's themed art call.

92 ARTIST INTERVIEW

Andrew Norris

Become acquainted with perhaps a few unknown dimensions – thoughts, ambitions, wisdoms, life changing moments – of this inspirational artist.



60



50

Get the latest ArtAscent news.

Sign up for
the ArtAscent email
newsletter to receive
notice of upcoming
issue themes, selected
artists and writers,
issue releases,
and more.

Sign up at
www.ArtAscent.com



Inspiring gifts to give.
www.ArtAscent.com



Production

Design by the ArtAscent team

Contributing Writers and Editors

Alexis Culotta PhD, Zuleika Murat, Grace Michael

Advertising

Promote your business to people who invest in art and join us in advancing the careers of artists. View advertising packages at www.ArtAscent.com/advertising-services.

Be an ArtAscent Contributing Writer

To contribute contemporary, historical, international, regional, cultural or other articles or regular columns of interest to art collectors, buyers and lovers, submit your Art Investor Tips article at www.ArtAscent.com/article-submissions.

Purchase Issues

To purchase issues, visit www.ArtAscent.com.

Purchase Art and Writing

Art images and written article contributions and call submissions are warranted by the submitter as their intellectual property. Prices shown are in Canadian dollars and may change at any time. Contact artists and writers directly regarding their submissions, to hire them and to purchase their work. ArtAscent would love to hear if you made a purchase after seeing an artist's or writer's work here.

ArtAscent Art & Literature Journal is published six times a year by Skybase Publishing Inc. Artistic, editorial and advertising submissions will be accepted at the discretion of ArtAscent. All submissions are subject to editing. No warranties of any kind, specific or implied, are provided concerning the accuracy or timeliness of any published materials. ArtAscent has undertaken no independent verification, with respect to infringement of copyright law, to ensure the originality of artwork that appears in editorial or advertisement. Omissions or errors will be compensated only by possible discounting of a future ad at publisher's discretion.

Copyright ©2017 Skybase Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form is prohibited without permission from the publisher.

info@ArtAscent.com www.ArtAscent.com

Foreword and Artist Profiles

Zuleika Murat is a professional Art Historian, with a PhD in History of Art from the University of Padua. A recipient of many post-doctoral research fellowships, she has published several studies on different aspects of Northern Italian visual culture between the 13th and the 15th centuries.

Alexis Culotta holds a PhD in Art History and currently works with several arts organizations in Chicago. She is also an arts writer and enjoys any opportunity to promote today's artists for tomorrow.



On The Front Cover

Coast
by Hayley Haddad



On The Back Cover

Christopher George Latore Wallace
by Gene Tanta



www.facebook.com/ArtAscent



www.twitter.com/ArtAscent



www.pinterest.com/ArtAscentMag

**Advertise
with us and
promote your
business,
gallery,
publication
or event.**

Reach art buyers,
writers and artists,
online and/or in print.

View advertising packages:

www.ArtAscent.com/advertising-services




ArtAscent

Art & Literature Journal

Showcasing outstanding
artists and writers from around the world

Foreword



Lost... a brief word that is profound in its meaning. Being lost may indicate mistaking actual directions or feeling spiritually aimless amidst a sea of those with clear purpose. The feeling of being lost is universally unnerving, and it can be painful because it will force you to become increasingly aware of your presence and your shortcomings; it can overwhelm you with a sense of vulnerability. But, at the same time, being lost can be remarkably rejuvenating because it forces you out of your comfort zone and can help you to equally embrace your weaknesses and your strengths. Then, as you find your way back from being lost, you often will learn more about yourself and emerge as a healthier, happier, and more focused individual.

For the artist within you, becoming lost can help you to achieve new heights in your work. French artist Paul Gauguin lost himself in French Polynesia and emerged as a pioneer of modern painting. Massachusetts-born writer Henry David Thoreau lost himself at Walden Pond, and the result was a landmark in American literature. To lose yourself is, in some instances, a chance to find your greatest talents that otherwise might remain obscured behind the routine of the everyday. From this perspective, it is almost essential that you occasionally get lost so that you can reconnect with your potentially hidden qualities.

This 27th volume of *ArtAscent Art & Literature Journal* celebrates being lost, and the transformative power the process holds. The artists and writers in this issue explore what it means to be lost, both literally and metaphorically, through a variety of media. The result is an issue in which you can experience the sights, sounds, and colours of being lost from diverse perspectives through gripping prose and plays of colour. As you lose yourself among these pages, may you become empowered by the individual journeys of these artists as they stray from reality to become absorbed in their work.

By Zuleika Murat

Audrey Piguet

www.audreypiguet.com



Gabriel #2

Ultrachrome print on fine art paper under acrylic | 39.4 x 27 x 0.8" | \$400



In 1948, Edward Tolman introduced the concept of *Cognitive Map* which refers to a semantic network used by individuals to acquire, code, and decode information and phenomena in their everyday spatial environment. But what if the universe which surrounds you looks like a dreamlike vision? Audrey Piguet challenges her public by presenting the viewers with fantastic universes where reality and imagination overlap.

Audrey is a photographer who works with a camera and then manipulates the image digitally. She thus creates a cosmos where reality and fantasy blend and result in new imaginary worlds. The juxtaposition of these apparently distinct and yet inseparable universes has always been a source of inspiration in Audrey's art. By adding imaginative textures to realistic photos, she triggers active reactions in the beholders, challenging each viewer's cognitive map and semantic network.

The series she presents here is entitled "Gabriel" and relates to our theme, Lost, both in respect to narrative and technique.

Gabriel is the biblical archangel usually represented as a powerful warrior. Audrey's Gabriel is, however, a slightly different character. Banished from Heaven, Gabriel has lost his wings and his face is covered by a mask. He has been deprived of his glorious destiny and is wandering in an unwelcoming world.

The compositions are almost monochromatic with dark tones restricted to few nuances. The purpose behind this choice is to communicate a sense of oblivion with a lack of feelings and senses.

The technique adopted by Audrey relies on the removal of details and colours to activate a sense of disorientation in the viewer.

For the outdoor scene, Audrey first captured the landscape. She then manipulated the images, deleting all the unnecessary details and colours to finally obtain

a dreamlike scene which communicates a sense of loss. Audrey then photographed the model in her studio and integrated him into the scene afterwards. She used a slightly different technique for the portrait and the back picture which she had worked in her studio. The intense chiaroscuro contrast is obtained using a black background and flash-lamps equipped with light-shapers. All the imperfections were removed during postproduction which enhanced the images with the smooth final effect crucial to Audrey's aesthetic output.

For a long time, Audrey has been exploring the possibilities provided by light's artificial effects. Her passionate use of vibrant contrasts and intense chiaroscuro is indebted to painters such as Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Gericault—all renown for their skilful ability in combining a sympathetic observation of reality with a dramatic use of lighting. In addition, Audrey also admires filmmakers such as Tim Burton and David Lynch who both make clever usage of dreamlike imagery and structures.

Audrey Piguet is a professional photographer who has graduated from Vevey School of Photography, Vevey, Switzerland in 2012. Since then, she has been working as a freelance photographer and artist. Her photographs were exhibited in galleries and cultural events all across Europe. She has been the recipient of many international awards and her creations have been published in art journals and catalogues.

By Zuleika Murat

Audrey Piguet

Gabriel #1

Ultrachrome print on fine art paper under acrylic | 39.4 x 57 x 0.8" | \$5,000



Artist

Gabriel #3

Ultrachrome print on fine art paper under acrylic | 39.4 x 39.4 x 0.8" | \$200



Gold

Manny Veiga's prose enlivens the senses, and this energy is tangible in his story, "Good Gods Speak Softly." In it, he conjures imagery of a lost soldier and an encounter with a mysterious person that proves more frightening than the battlefield itself.

One of the most captivating elements of Manny's writing is the way in which it allows the reader to truly become his character.

In "Good Gods Speak Softly," Manny convincingly puts his reader in the shoes of a stray soldier who has been compelled to flee the front lines and thus must face both his inner turmoil and his meeting with this mysterious person. The story centres on this encounter, and Manny primes the reader to imagine with a sinking feeling akin to a classic horror film as to what will happen to the stray soldier. Thus, it should come as no surprise that Manny cites Stephen King as one of his most favorite authors for the influence of King's work is very clear in Manny's work. King's most iconic works, from *Pet Cemetery* (1983) to *It* (1986), captivated readers because of the rich character development and the compelling horror in which those characters become embroiled; Manny is able to accomplish something similar in "Good Gods Speak Softly" which is noteworthy considering he does so in a very short story. Manny immediately pulls his readers into the world of this troubled soldier whose panting breath and sickening fear is almost palpable.

Manny's soldier is indeed lost... not only in his military mission but also in the pursuit of his future. Indeed, Manny must have tried to envision himself in such a lost state in an effort to capture its visceral sensations. "I thought about what it might feel like to be lost and alone in a desperate situation," Manny said. Then he continued on, "I think we all want to think the best of ourselves, and so the disappointment we feel when we don't live up to those standards can feel like a personal betrayal." That sense of betrayal resonates in Manny's main character as he tumbles into a deepening despair.

Manny Veiga holds a degree in print journalism which he received from Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2010. He developed his writing skill by working for the Boston Globe as a freelance journalist during his schooling, and it was during these writing assignments that he became fascinated with human interest stories. He has enjoyed a career in marketing and public relations while writing in his free time.

By Alexis Culotta, PhD



Good Gods Speak Softly

The boy had run until his legs could carry him no farther. They had seized up some while ago. At first naked fear had blinded his pain, but now that he had put some distance between himself and the battlefield, its sedative effect had worn off, and he began to feel the sting of his retreat.

Running was never his intention. That, most of all, was why shame blistered every inch of bare skin. To flee had been instinct. When the artillery fired its first fearsome volley over the river, it burst his left eardrum and wiped his mind clean. He forgot every obligation—to country, to family, himself. An inner impulse took over, every synapse, tissue, and fiber fulfilling an innate cowardice.

He wasn't sure how far he had run, but he was sure now that he was lost. He was surrounded by forest. This was unfamiliar territory, and he was a deserter. Union or Confederate, any soldier he encountered would see him as the enemy.

Leaning against a tree, he considered his next move. He would need a change of clothes. He couldn't take main roads while wearing this uniform. He wondered if any hunting trails passed through these woods.

Suddenly, rumbling.

Horses. Several of them. Cavalry? Could they have sent someone after him? How could they know he was gone? Were they reinforcements? They were moving quickly. They would be here in minutes.

He searched for cover. He settled behind the tangled trunks of two nearby trees. It felt absurd—disgraceful, even—this soon after fleeing, but in spite of his shame, he readied his rifle.

The rumbling had grown louder. He peered in every direction before catching a glimpse of a dark cluster to the south.

It looked to be a group of four or five riders. He could see now that they weren't soldiers.

Good Gods Speak Softly (continued)

Bent forward over their horses, they wore dark hats and long, black coats that whipped behind them like wraiths. They tore through the trees at a reckless, startling pace. They showed no hesitation, darting through the underbrush, dodging hanging branches and hurtling fallen limbs.

Their horses seemed to glide across the forest floor, but he could feel their every footfall reverberate through his chest like thunder. The rhythmic patter entranced him. The riders hadn't seemed to notice him. Their focus was steady on the path ahead. He was a safe distance away. They would pass in minutes, and he would sit and watch quietly.

"You lost?"

His heart nearly burst through his chest. He clambered desperately over the tree trunk, abandoning the rifle. He was tackled. Then flipped to his back. One gloved hand clapped over his mouth. Another pressed a blade to his throat.

Eyes wide, he stared into a dark face hidden mostly by a wide hat and black bandana. A single tiny cross was etched into the man's dark skin, right above his left eyebrow.

"I won't lie to ya. That was... not very difficult." It was a Southern voice. Cajun. "You was exposed. Wide open."

The boy whimpered. His chest constricted. His breathing was rapid and shallow.

"S'alright. They can dress you up, but that don't make you a soldier, huh?" He laughed softly.

"Yeahhh. Not your fault. I know how it goes. They made me fight too. Long time ago. Way before all this... mess." He paused, staring forward through the trees.

"They sent us west. Take back some land from some... Apache... or Comanche... one or the other."

His bloodshot eyes locked onto the boy. "Nasty stuff."

"When it was over, you know what they had me do? You know how they like to take... trophies? The natives, I mean. Guess the general thought it'd be funny...taste of they own medicine. I didn't think so. But. An order's an order. So I took this blade, this one right here, and I bent down and grabbed one of those Apaches just like this."

He placed the knife to the squirming boy's temple, then cradled his neck with the other hand.

"Made a cut right... here." The boy flinched as the blade pressed lightly into the forehead, drawing a dot of blood. "Started pullin. Guess I thought it'd slice real smooth, but it kept stickin. Could barely keep my hands still. Was slippin all over the place. But, after a while, I made it all the way 'round. Had to pull hard, you know. But it came off. All in one piece. And I held it up..."

He raised his empty hand in triumph. They both stared at it. A few seconds. A few seconds more. It was quiet, except for the sober hooting of a nearby owl.

"Anyway."

He lowered his hand.

"Nighttime's comin. You wandered into these woods. Don't know where to hide. Don't know where to go. Sure don't know how to fight. And you all alone."

The boy's breathing was frantic. His eyes watery. His clothes sticky with sweat.

The man rose to his feet. The boy stayed frozen to the ground. He could now see the man in full. He wore a large black coat, dark leather boots, and, around his neck, a thick frayed cord from which hung clattering shells, stones, feathers, and bone. He tucked the dagger into his belt and extended a right hand covered in bright coloured jewels.

"The night ain't too friendly to the lost. We best get movin."

Merethe Wessel-Berg

www.mwb.no



Temptation 1

Photography | 55 x 60 x 2" | NFS



Henri Matisse once said: "I've been forty years discovering that the queen of all colours is black." Merethe Wessel-Berg adopted the painter's approach in her photos and personal narratives, all expressed in black and white.

Merethe is a Norwegian fine art and street photographer. Curiosity and emotions have always worked as the motivation behind her art. She describes her photographs as questions, which have the capability to compose a narrative when put in a sequence. Like single scenes from a movie, they challenge the viewer who is prompted to reflect on them and find their deep meaning within a wider scenario. In addition, each picture is embedded with an intense emotional content. When Merethe takes a picture, she uses her emotion and temperament in order to screen reality in a brand new way. Her works present facts and situations that are filtered through her personality. Yet, she does not wish to impose her perspective on the beholders. On the contrary, she believes that each photograph provides its viewers with a subjective rather than an objective way of exploring reality. For this reason, Merethe's works always have a kind of openness which leaves the beholders enough space to experience the events they are presented with through the lens of their own feelings, emotions, and sensitivity.

Merethe is more interested in unexpected and surprising events which provide her with an ideal framework to explore nuances of human behaviour and feelings. She feels closed stories and standard events do not have any potential to activate genuine and instinctive human reactions.

The series she presents here is entitled "Temptation" and consists of black and white pictures. The project is aimed at exploring and describing the different aspects of temptation which a person can face when defining crossroads in his or her life. During those crucial events, a person can both get lost or lose something. The series can either be read as a sequence of events or as multiple untied and independent events.

The use of black and white gives an unusual perspective which is not straight-on but rather angular; the deformation of shapes and contours which are veiled communicate a sense of vanishing as if you were ideally looking at a memory or an emotion. The viewer is engaged and invited to explore freely his or her own emotions.

The idea of getting lost is wisely epitomized by the human figure that is portrayed seated as if he/she was incapable to deal with difficulties and challenging events. The concept of losing something is represented by the man who is walking away from a sort of crack visible behind him, walking away from a chance, a possibility, or a person? The compositions can activate different responses in the viewers, and each one can feel different; each can be opposing, and/or emotions.

To compose this series, Merethe used her digital camera, carefully regulating exposure and light effects, and wisely balancing the black-and-white contrasts.

Merethe Wessel-Berg's work has been exhibited in Europe, the USA, Russia, Uzbekistan, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, and China, and her works have been published in art journals and catalogues. She has been awarded many international prizes, such as IPA (International Photography Awards) 2016, Julia Margaret Cameron Award 2016 and 2017, Pollux Awards 2016 and 2017, and the Charles Dodgson Black and White Award 2017.

By Zuleika Murat

Merethe Wessel-Berg

Temptation 2

Photography | 55 x 60 x 2" | NFS



Artist

Temptation 3
Photography | 38 x 60 x 2" | NFS



Merethe Wessel-Berg

Temptation 4

Photography | 38 x 60 x 2" | NFS



Artist

21

ArtAscent

Temptation 5

Photography | 60 x 38 x 2" | NFS



Vallenssia

www.vallenssia-art.com



Words Unspoken

Acrylic on canvas | 27.5 x 39.3 x 0.78" | \$1,635



Offering a refreshed take on the classic portrait, Vallenssia breaks the bounds of the traditional female likeness. Losing herself within the parameters of abstract and the real, Vallenssia aims to blend these elements to create striking yet subtle portraits. Such is the balance struck in works such as *Words Unspoken*, *Silent* and *Fearless*, all of which are featured in this issue.

Akin to those who are lost, Vallenssia's art appears as if it is situated between two worlds. On the one hand, her skill as a portraitist echoes the finessed intricacies of the Old Masters. Her painted profiles are rendered with a touch akin to Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503) or Michelangelo's *Libyan Sibyl* (1508-1512), with contours and colouring that bring her sitters to life in vibrant detail. On the other hand, though, Vallenssia's modernist deconstruction—the slow decay of this beauty through seemingly flaking patches of paint—almost seems an allusion to the vibrant yet temporal ethereality of contemporary street art. From this perspective, Vallenssia could also be seen as approaching a style of realism akin to contemporary figure Chuck Close whose paintings play with the viewer's perceptions of reality and challenge one's understanding of what is real and what is imagined. Vallenssia offers a similar tension in her paintings, balancing this finesse with frayed edges.

Part of Vallenssia's ingenuity is that she refuses to be confined by the conventional tools of the painterly trade. Sometimes she swaps her brushes for palette knives and spatulas. Vallenssia also experiments with different media such as photography or poetry. It seems safe to say, though, that painting is her preferred means of expression, in part because of its changeable nature.

"The thing that I love about painting," she shared, "is that the painting is always changing, depending on the time of the day (and) on the sources of light." This mutability is perhaps a metaphorical parallel to her female portraits wherein the sitters themselves are in the midst of transition. Imperfection creeps in at the edges of her sitter's faces, introducing an element of discomfort akin to the mysterious monsters that lurk in the periphery of the otherwise peaceful paintings of artist Salvador Dali. Vallenssia continues this surreal and yet seductive style and thus carries the artistic tradition forward.

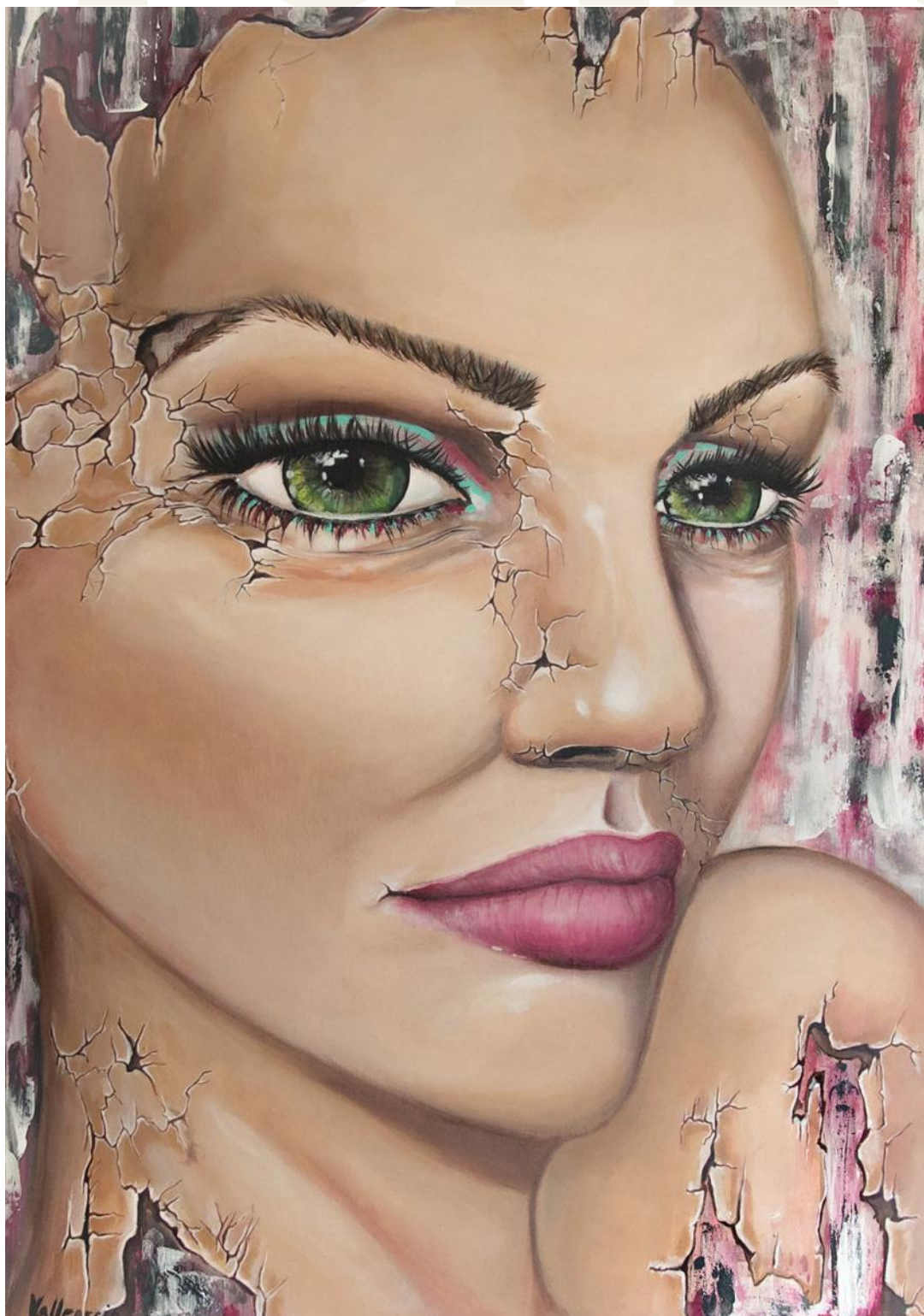
Vallenssia began exploring art as a young girl through the media of drawing and painting. Her work has been the recipient of numerous awards. Her painting, *The Storm*, was feted with a Special Merit Award at the International Competition of Light Space and Time Online Art Gallery, and *Words Unspoken* received a similar accolade at the International All Women Art Exhibition in January 2017.

By Alexis Culotta, PhD

Vallenssia

Fearless

Acrylic on canvas | 27.5 x 39.3 x 0.78" | \$1,584



Artist

25
ArtAscent

Silent

Acrylic on canvas | 27.5 x 27.5 x 0.78" | \$678



Sandra Doore

sandradoore.com



Text Spectrum No 3

Oil sticks on paper with collage | 9 x 14"



Text Spectrum No 2
Oil sticks on paper with collage | 9 x 14"



Sandra Doore

Lost in Translation No 4

Oil sticks on paper | 9 x 14"





Six Fantasies of Telemann (Murdered This Evening in Paris)

The fat grey pigeon's lost her way.
Somehow, she's ended up in the Metro.
Despite the ample crumbs, she wants out, but
she can't tell east from west, north from south.
Mon dieu! she's going in circles! At this rate
she'll never find her way to *les Fontaines*
de Place de la Concorde.

Vite! Vite!
the train is coming! But which train?
It doesn't matter. They're all wrong.
Every *ligne* leads to a dead end.
This is one time when it might be best
to commandeer a bench to sleep under.
A place to dream of sun... of children's voices...
of crusts of *pain perdu*.

Peter Palfi

www.peterpalfi.com



Anatomy of a Taxidermy Kingfisher

Taxidermy Kingfisher, resin | 9 x 4 x 1" | NFS



Little Joseph
Taxidermy, oak, felt, gummy bears | 24 x 24 x 36" | NFS



D.BETTY

<https://desirebetty.carbonmade.com/>



Untitled

Acrylic on canvas | 10 x 30" | \$1,000



Head In The Clouds
Acrylic on canvas | 10 x 30" | \$1,000



Lexie Bragg

lexiebragg.com



Untitled
Photography



Untitled
Photography



Lexie Bragg

Untitled
Photography





The Black Swan

I wanted love.
She wanted lust.

When he came to meet us,
He found my lips on his;
But the marks on his back -
That's what I lost to her.

I wanted to go steady.
She wanted an adventure.

When he asked if we were ready,
He saw me dubiously biting my lip;
But the decisive nails cutting through his pants -
That's what I lost to her.

I wanted his gentle touch.
She wanted to rule him.

When he tied us to his bed,
He saw terror in my eyes;
But the untamed rubbing below -
That's what I lost to her.

I wanted justice.
She wanted villainy.

When he opened his door the next day
He saw shame in my eyes;
But the dagger that slit his throat -
That's what I lost to her.

I want out from this trap.
She keeps pulling my strings.

When life comes calling some day,
I wish to dance in white again.
But with black wings unfurling on my back,
I am scared of yet again losing to her.

I want freedom now.
But she wouldn't leave.

When they come looking for me,
They will find my wrist in blood;
But the dagger will have her fingerprints -
That's when she will lose forever.

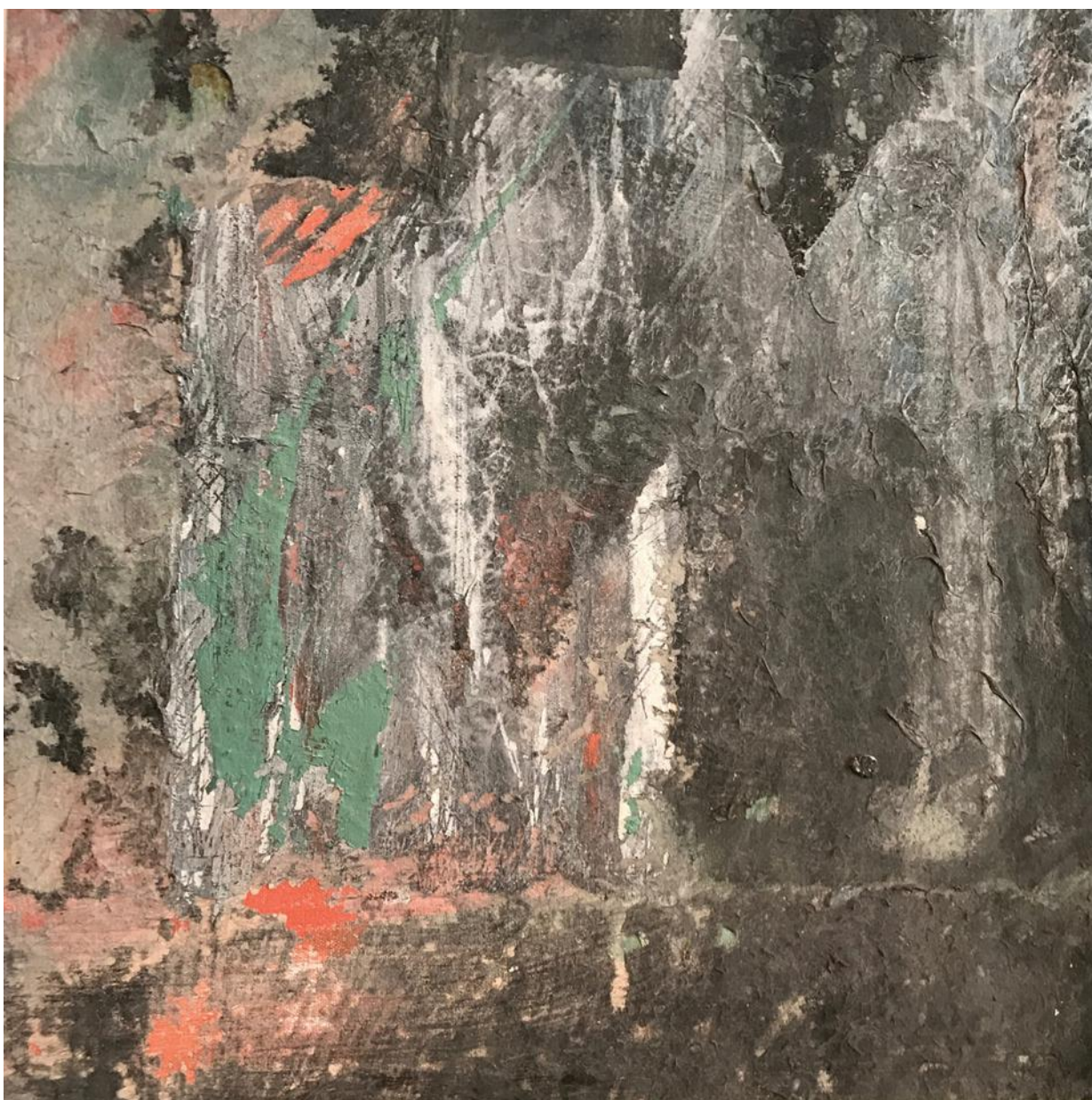
Cynthia Yatchman

<https://www.facebook.com/painter.cjyat/>



An Unspoken History
Mixed media | 9 x 12" | \$450





Bottomless
Mixed media | 16 x 16" | \$500

Daniel Jean-Baptiste

<http://www.jean-baptiste.com>



Oasis

Batik Silk | 40 x 30" | Sold

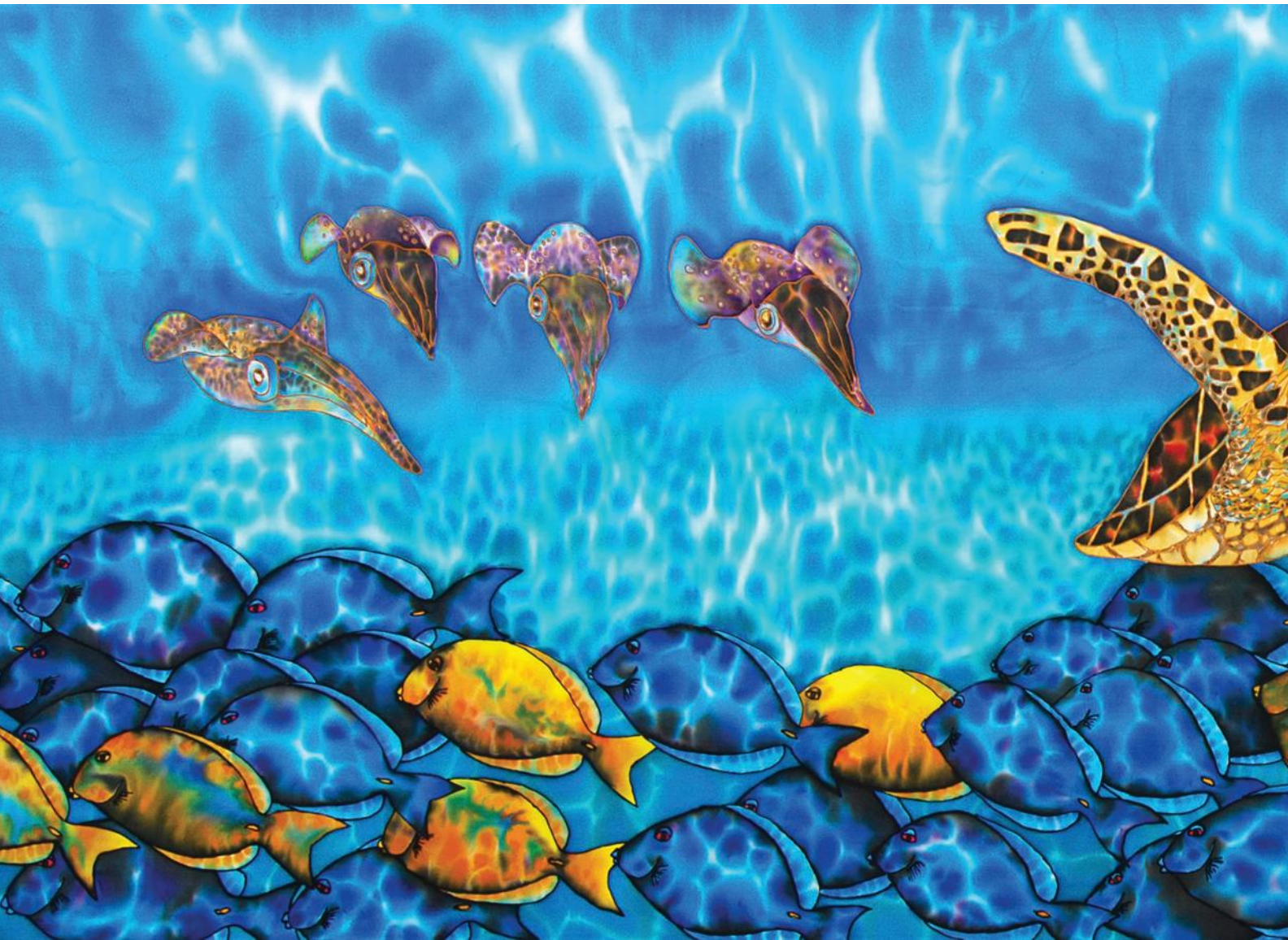


Coral Garden
Batik Silk | 40 x 30" | Sold



Daniel Jean-Baptiste

BOTH PAGES: Akumal
Batik Silk | 82 x 28" | Sold





Hyunsoo Kim

www.hyunsoo-art.com



In Case You're Lost

Acrylic paint on canvas | 47 x 59 x 1" | NFS





Collar

out the window
a young girl
kind smile hair down
to her waist
walking
her rottweiler
fur black
as coal she
drags
her
by a leash
imported
from another country

i see her
every day
on empty streets by familiar
buildings
in mirrors
but she
never looks up
changes pace
keeps moving

i see her
every day
the way her smile
bleeds

the dog has a home
there is an address
a street name
a number
engraved on her collar

the girl
nobody knows
for sure

Hayley Haddad

hayleyhaddadart.squarespace.com



Obstruction

Collage, gesso, pen, ink wash, image transfer on canvas | 18 x 24" | \$300



Parkway

Collage, gesso, pen, ink wash, image transfer on paper | 32 x 46" | NFS



Carla Cosenza Mormile

<https://www.lensculture.com/carla-cosenza-mormile>



Praça da Estação Beggars Detalhe
Colour digital photography | \$400



No Escape
Colour digital photography | \$350



António Castilho

<http://caastilho5.wixsite.com/antonio-castilho-pt>



Earring 1





Earring 3

Sayaka Suzuki

www.sayaka-suzuki.com



Drifting Dreamers

PVC pipes, Upcycled fabric, embroidery thread, sharpie pen | 144 x 48 x 21" | NFS





Lost Without You

Lost,
Is what I will be,
When I lose those who created me.
My Mother.
My Father.
Who will I be?
Lost without you,
To guide me through.
Lost without you,
To make it through.
I hope to be strong,
As you taught me to be.
I will carry on,
As you would want me to.
Life without you,
Irreparable broken heart,
Reliving the good times shared.
Life lessons will remain,
And in that vein,
I will maintain,
Your legacy.

Brittany Ann Kelley

www.brittanykelleydesign.com



The Missing Audience Part 2
Photography



The Missing Audience Part 1
Photography



Loic Vendrame Photography

<http://loicvendramephotography.com>



Spain
Photography





Loic Vendrame Photography

Spain
Photography





David Bendiksen

<http://www.davidbendiksen.com>

59

ArtAscent

Contrapposto

Sepia-toned silver gelatin print from 35mm Fuji Neopan 1600 film negative | 8 x 10" | \$125



Eric Johnston
www.ericjohnstonfineart.com



The Prophecy of Pancake Flats - Detail View 3
Acrylic on canvas | 170 x 75 x 2" | NFS



The Prophecy of Pancake Flats - Detail View 2
Acrylic on canvas | 170 x 75 x 2" | NFS

NEXT SPREAD: Housewife
Acrylic on canvas | 49 x 37 x 2" | \$7.950







Josh Harnack

joshharnackart.com



A Moment with Nature





Gnossienne No. 1

"Is anyone sitting here?" she asked.

Of course not. She could see that, but I knew she was just trying to be polite. I told her to be my guest.

I don't know if it was the alcohol or the lack of sleep, but I swear to god her face was glowing. She avoided eye contact with me after she took a seat, and it was probably for the best. The last time I looked at a woman like that, she walked away and never came back.

I didn't know how I ended up at this cafe, to be honest. I was groggy as I walked down Seventh Avenue and saw a happy hour sign out front. I was intrigued. A cafe that served coffee and beer almost seemed impossible.

But then I walked in and took a look at the people around me. Now I knew anything was possible. You could get lost on the same street you've walked down hundreds of times before. Stumble upon a sign, some neon lights, and it's over. Suddenly you've lost track of the time of day, where you were headed, and who you were going home to see. Lost it all, just like that.

She was a pretty little thing, couldn't have been more than thirty. I bet she had her mother's looks, maybe her father's eyes. But definitely the colour of her mother's hair, a warm brown. I liked the way the dim lighting of the cafe illuminated her face.

An employee came by and placed a glass of pale beer on our table. I hadn't heard anyone take her order. Maybe I wasn't paying attention. I was never paying enough attention.

She mumbled something to the worker, but the man was already out of earshot. As I watched her take a sip of the drink, I could tell it didn't matter to her.

She opened up her laptop, and the blue glow of the screen created a spotlight on her in the dark room. My laptop,

which was also open, wasn't doing shit for me. It was probably better that way.

What was she typing? She still hadn't made eye contact with me since she sat down. Now she was focused on whatever was on her screen, and I felt utterly ignored. She probably had more interest in the beer in front of her than the living, breathing person sitting across the table.

But what did I have to offer her, really? An empty chair, at first. It's like she already forgot I let her take a seat. I needed another drink. This was going to be a long night, especially if I was going to be treated like this.

The cursor blinked at me on the blank document on my screen. I blinked back, and it was already more socialization than I was getting from her. That bitch. I could've said no and told her to sit elsewhere. I didn't have to smile when I offered her the chair, but I did. No appreciation.

I started typing furiously on my laptop. I wasn't even keeping track of the words as I went along. I just wanted to look as busy as her. So busy that I couldn't look up from my screen to acknowledge her presence.

"So long as the drink flows, I will return," I wrote.

Then it hit me.

She wasn't looking for solace when she walked into the cafe that night. The happy hour sign had snared her. Just another victim, lost on Seventh Avenue on a lonely Sunday evening.

When the sun starts to dip in the sky on a late summer day, we all get a little anxious. It's that feeling that time is running out as everything starts to die around you. But nothing can start over again if it never ends.

She looked up from her laptop to take another sip of beer. Our eyes locked for just a moment under the fluorescent light. I thought she smiled, but maybe I imagined it.

Trish Reschly

www.sincerusphotography.com



Even though we want you, I know you're not coming back. We're old.

Photography on Hahnemühle Fine Art Paper | 18 x 24" | \$750



Everything is empty.
Photography on Hahnemühle Fine Art Paper | 18 x 24" | \$750



NEXT SPREAD: What are we going to do without you?
Photography on Hahnemühle Fine Art Paper | 18 x 24" | \$750







Metanoia

*To make injustice the only measure of
our attention is to praise the Devil.*

- Jack Gilbert

Talismanic rosary in hand,
I watch the breath of morning rise.
Warm mists, drifting upward
from the cold waters of the deep lake,
ascend into heaven. New clouds,
baby clouds form, from water to air,
a mystery unfolding before me.

Wafting east toward Mecca,
aglow with the rising sun,
they become angels with outstretched
wings, joining hands to worship the dawn.
Diminutive dots of dew descend upon
my cheeks, mix with a trace of tears,
uniting me with this celestial scene.

After all our sorrowful wailing,
are we not, after all, mostly water?
Infused with this infinite power
of transformation, my soul billows
with them; we are all one spirit
and permanence only a physical illusion.
The full moon still accents the shifting sky,

and day and night are one, until
a dove coos, cracking this scarlet code
of dawn. Then reality returns.
This simple reality: somewhere in a cell
your murderer still breathes, his breath
commingling in the atmosphere with ours,
until all our bodies eventually evaporate,

join as one. This unshakable reflection
acknowledges that these temporary
vessels we call home are merely swells
in an incalculably deep ocean,
so that even through tidal waves of grief,
we must allow the longest night
to pull us back into the light,

risking forgiveness in our search for peace....



Stephanie Sanchez

<http://www.steph-sanchez.com/>

71

ArtAscent

La Luna Sabes Todos Mis Secretos

Digital painting | 12 x 9" | NFS

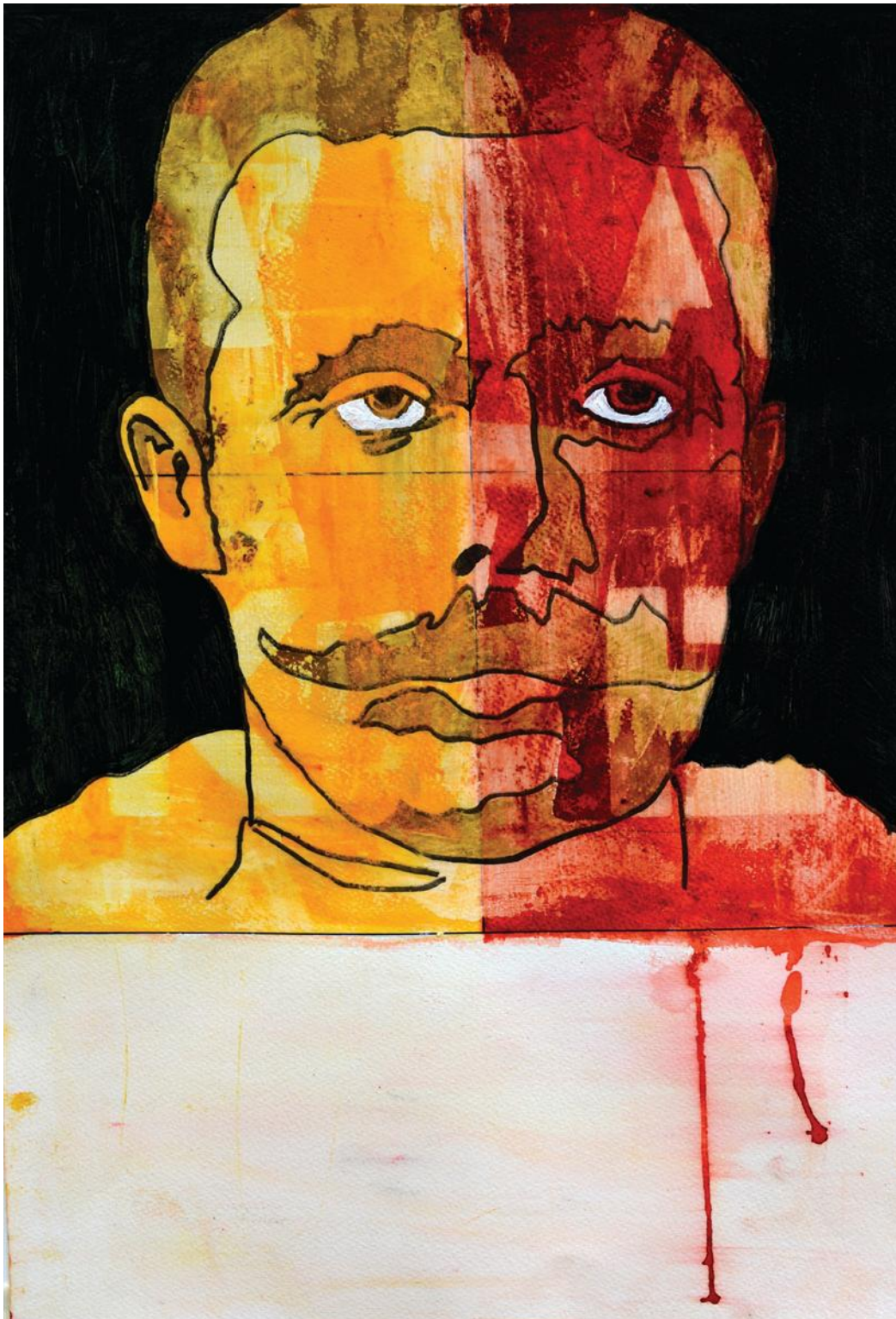


Gene Tanta

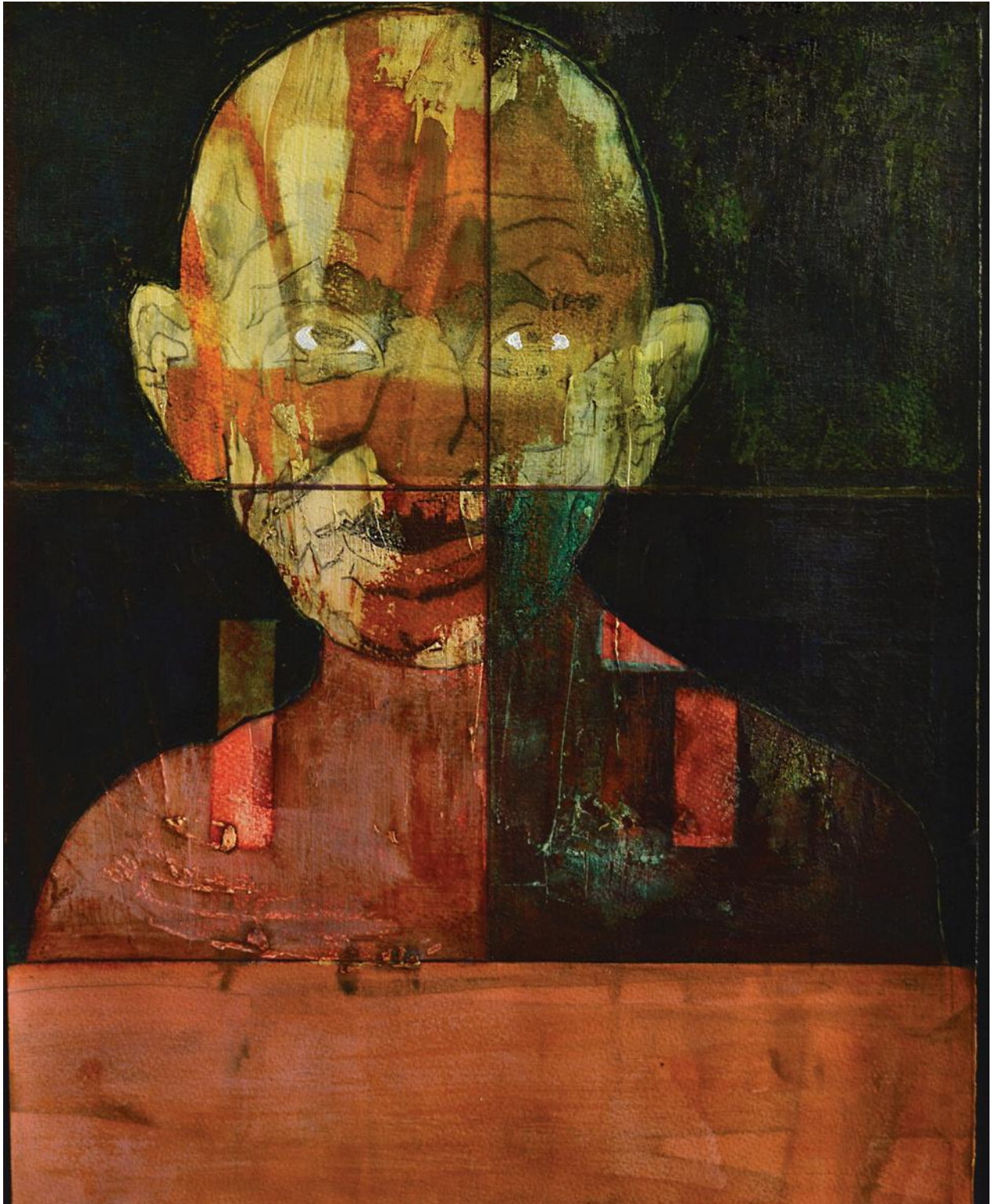
genetanta.com



Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria
Acrylic and food dye on paper | 18 x 24" | \$1,250



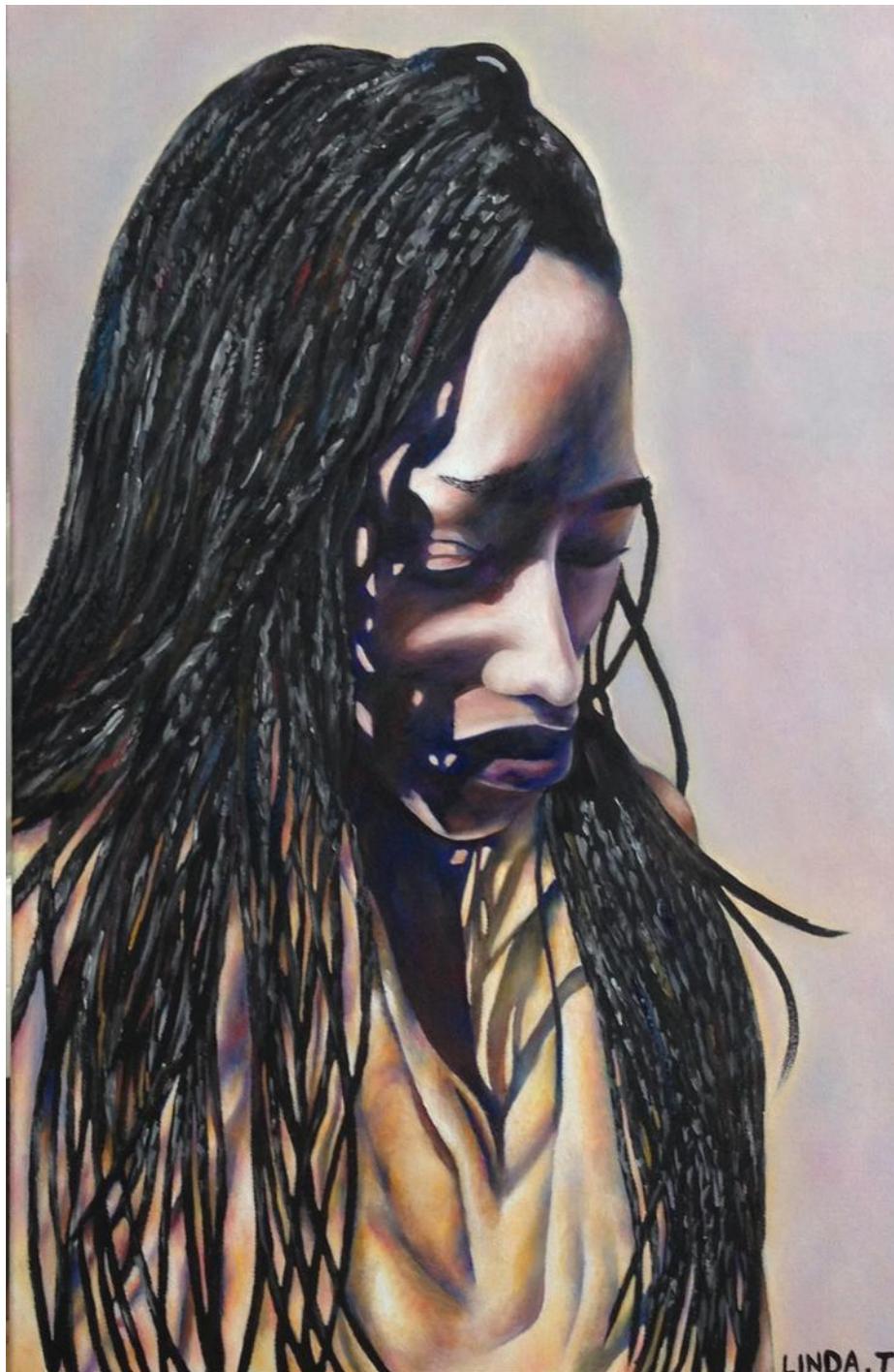
Mahatma Gandhi
Acrylic and food dye on paper | 18 x 24" | \$1,250



Linda Thusi-Mbanjwa



Lost Origins of Braided Girl
39 x 32 x 2" | Sold





Pink Seats

How can it be wrong when it feels so right? I guess sometimes the strongest possible connection between two people can still be overruled with timing or circumstances. I don't know but when our bodies touch something tenderly magical happens. I mean like one pinky touch raises hairs and goosebumps tend to appear immediately; all over his body and mine. I, mhh. I don't know. I suppose it's a blood rush or something science related. But it's like everything else in the world disappears and our souls swirl into this continuous, fluid spiral that spins us into an uncontrollable state of being. It is like a beautiful addiction... He became my addiction.

All that mattered in that moment was us connecting and becoming this visceral energy that is oh so unexplainable. Our heartbeats synchronized and that become the soundtrack to our lives.

It's terribly wrong, we both know we shouldn't do it but it's as if something just took over and we had no choice but to get as physically close as possible. Ahhhh. when it happened all I wanted; no all I needed was his extremely attractive body and mouth all over mine.

We made magic.

I guess that's it. I haven't seen him since I dropped him off at the disgusting grapefruit coloured bus stop that crisp winter night. If only I knew that embrace on my shivering bones was the last.

That was years ago now and I have felt extremely lonely and misunderstood ever since he moved away. Nothing can compare to what we had and everything else feels so irrelevant.

There are only so many things that can distract me from him each day. No matter what, I still end up in the same state missing him. My heart hurts constantly and I don't know what to do with myself.

I don't just want you back; my soul needs you back. I can

still feel your presence so potently; it seduces my whole sense of self whenever I stop for a moment to just be.

The other night I went to my friend's dance show which was held in the same studio where we danced together and on the same premise in which we used to see each other every day. My heart sunk as soon as I walked through those doors. An insanely strong force of "what used to be" flooded my mind, body and soul and I had to resist the urge to collapse into a scrambled mess of remorse.

It was if as I was watching my past self right before my eyes and I was absolutely fizzing. I haven't been anywhere close to that happy since. I was the sombre cloud of death watching my past self living freely with so much life and love to give. It makes me sick now thinking about how good I felt back as I don't know if I'll ever be her again. Being around him was so toxic and everything felt like a dream.

I miss the version of myself he made me become.

He turned me into the person I've always strived to be and enabled me to reach a disk of absolute bliss that I know I would struggle to find again anytime soon. We were so tuned-in to each other it was unreal. Something just clicked and that was us, set for life.

Well, it was supposed to be.

If only we weren't so scared when it happened... I fell hardest first, you realised first—you bit the bullet in asking me out. I froze and was too slow. Two weeks later when I had broken the strings and was ready to ignite the light, that ship had already sailed (and possibly sunk).

I was left lost at sea...

...ready to be forgotten.

Maybe one day that boat will float back in sight but it is currently at a different island happily being the light to someone else's house.

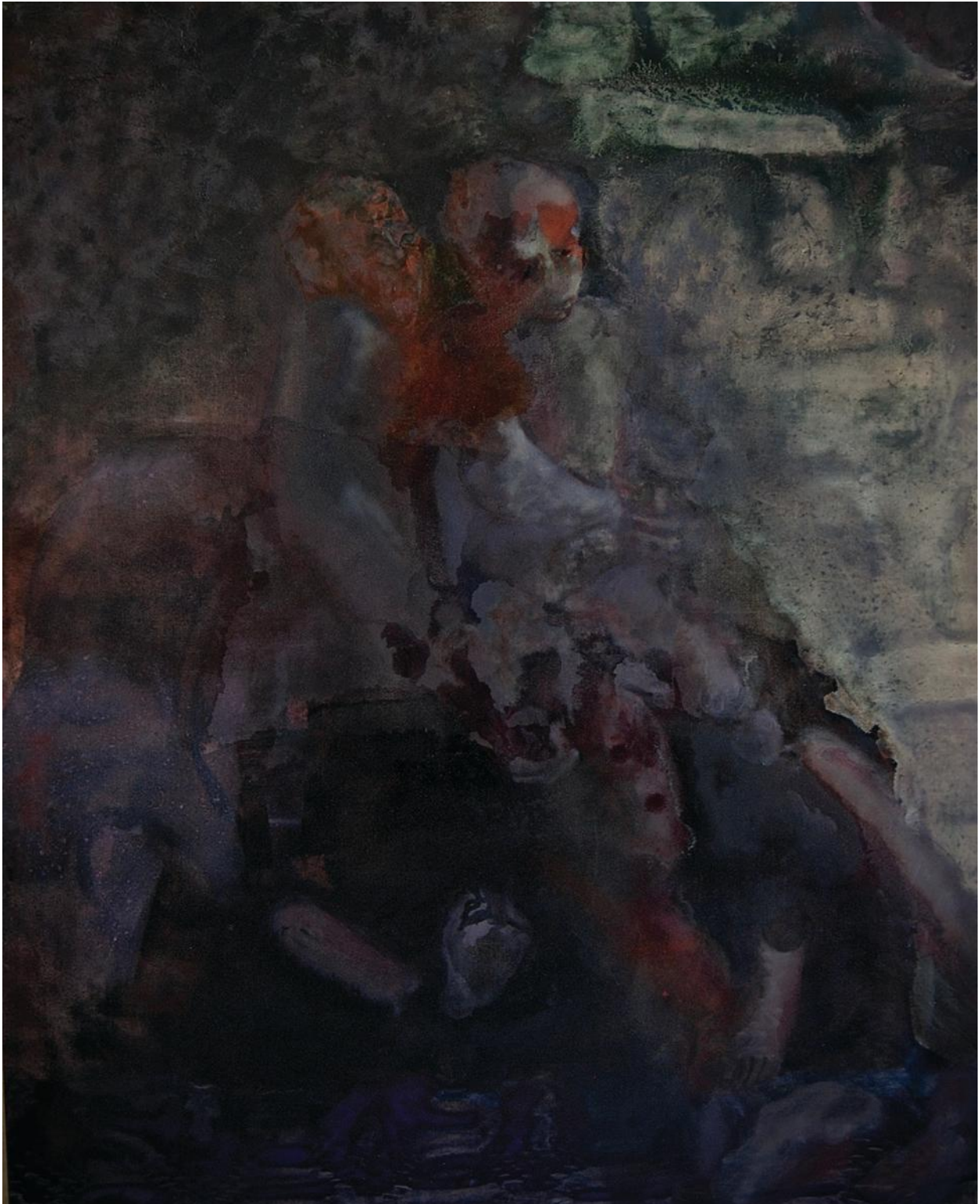
Lee White

www.leewhitepaintings.com



Embers of You

Oil on canvas | 48 x 60 x 2" | \$3,130.75



Insomnia

Oil on canvas | 48 x 60 x 2" | \$3,130.75



Lisa Whittington

lisalovewhittington.com



Going In Circles



Disoriented

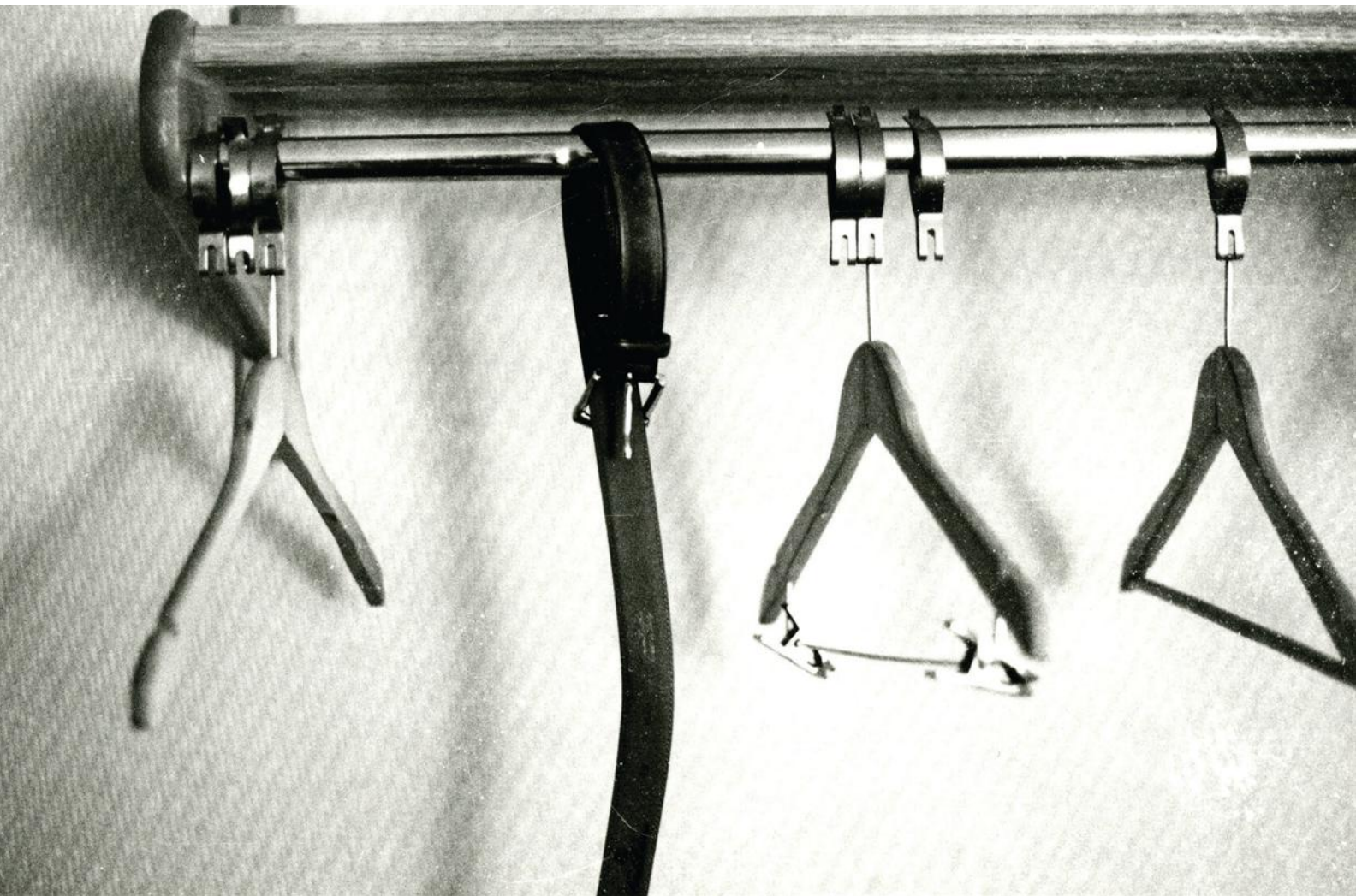


Gregory Zaffino

Gregory-zaffino.squarespace.com



The Cozy Corner
Photography | 8 x 11" | NFS



Inside
Photography | 8 x 11" | NFS





Three Anthems for Althea

There's no party for Althea's seventeenth birthday. No mother-baked cake. No giggling friends tittering over glasses of fizz. No puffed-up father jingling car keys from his finger, a pink envelope containing a driving school gift certificate in his other hand.

Nothing.

She doesn't cry. Doesn't swallow hard. She pulls her black toque down over her shaved head and buries herself in the cardboard box; all she wants is to be warm.

Anthem 1. Warmth:

A sun-filled kitchen with familiar pine table. Chairs with fat buttoned cushions picturing scarlet-sailed boats. Yellow striped curtains frame the window with views over the pasture. A chestnut gelding grazes, whinnies, raises his head, tosses his mane, in recognition of your birthday. The kitchen smells of coffee. And bacon. A brown dog stretches, raises his haunches, and comes to you, nuzzling his nose into your clasped hands.

"Walk, Bobbie?" you ask, petting him, your gold bangles chiming like a thousand distant bells.

His fronded tail wafts 'yes,' and together you walk to the shore, over the dunes to the white sand beach. The ocean is flat ass calm. The sand is hot. You dip your toes in the clear salt water.

Kicking. Someone is banging the cardboard box. Drunks drifting to another drinking hole.

"Gettup bitch," one says, baring his yellow teeth.

"Git outta there whore," says a second, gobbing green phlegm at Althea's shelter.

"Fuck off," she says, "get your own pitch, this's mine." She lets the glint of her blade show. So they can see how wicked her steel is. She holds their stare. No one gets the better of Althea, a.k.a. Blades.

"Bitch," says the first.

"Fucker," she says.

They stagger off towards the canal, gagging on their dry smokers' laughter; Javex sucking down a drain.

Blades crouches. Her bony ass barely touches the wet pavement, but she feels the damp draw up into her. She sets her knife on the sidewalk. Spins. Watches the flash of steel as the streetlight picks up its gleam second by second. Like an unwinding clock. It slows. Then stops. The tip pointing at the tavern.

Anthem 2. Wanted:

He's tall and fair with blue eyes. His smile is wide. And white. He's in a tux, waiting for you at the bar. His name is Christopher.

You're in the emerald silk birthday dress your father bought. A wrap-over, revealing a hint of pale breasts in cream lace. Matching panties you don't anticipate being seen, let alone hastily ripped off, this night. That's the future. You wear your namesake grandmother's ammolite necklace. And the diamond earrings from your mother.

You hesitate before joining your date at the bar: you need to savour your perfect birthday day. From breakfast in the sunshine kitchen. To Mother's excitement over the birthday cake. "Sweet Seventeen" in flowing pink script across the top of the cake. Edged with pink sugar roses. And Father, ruddy-faced, thrilled with the silver Echo convertible parked outside. For you. But best of all, your walk on the beach with Bobbie.

And now it is the evening, and here is your beau. Wanting you.

Blades hangs around behind the tavern, waiting for someone coming out for a smoke. Hoping she can bum one. The yard stinks of piss among the kegs and barrels. The door grinds open. It is beginning to rot at the bottom. A guy comes out, he is bald, with grey chin stubble. He wears a scuffed black pleather jacket and drooping jeans, his crotch exposed. He scratches his matted belly and unzips his pants. Blades stays in the shadows. He pisses inches from her feet, the steaming spray catching her cargos and boots.

"Hoy," she hisses, "don't ya piss on me."

The man passes a nitrogenous fart. Goes back into the tavern. Blades stays in the shadows. Three men now, the third kicking the door. It splinters more.

"Here's the bitch, just like Biff said."

"She's all bones, it'll be like fucking nutcrackers, but hold her down, she'll do."

The third unzips his pants.

Anthem 3. Loved:

Christopher carries you in his arms. His minty breath whispers across your cheek. You've danced the evening away between the wine and lobster. And the shared tiramisu. With two spoons.

He sets you down on the beach. Reads a poem. "I've written this just for you," he says.

His soft voice tells you you're his reason for being. Comparing you to early morning birdsong, to sunsets, and all things between.

He kisses you with cautious dry lips, winding a stray tendril of your shining brown hair around your ear. You hold hands, lie back on the warm sand, watch the moon over the ocean, hear a distant loon's cry. You know you are loved. Not just by Christopher, who makes promises, but by your family who will wait up for you until your beau brings you home.

There, after hugging, you'll cluster around the kitchen table with tea from a teapot. Grandmother and Mother on either side of you; anxious to hear. Father opposite; furrowed brow. You'll tell them almost everything about your evening.

Blades drags her cart through wet empty backstreets. The wheels rattle over ruts, racketing like a dozen skateboarders. She pulls her black toque down over her shaved head and moves on, one day older, into the murky dawn.

Kathryn Reichert

www.kathrynreichert.com



3:39 AM

Digital photography | 15 x 10" | \$250



Currents
Digital photography | 15 x 10" | \$250



Brandy Woods

www.brandywoods.com

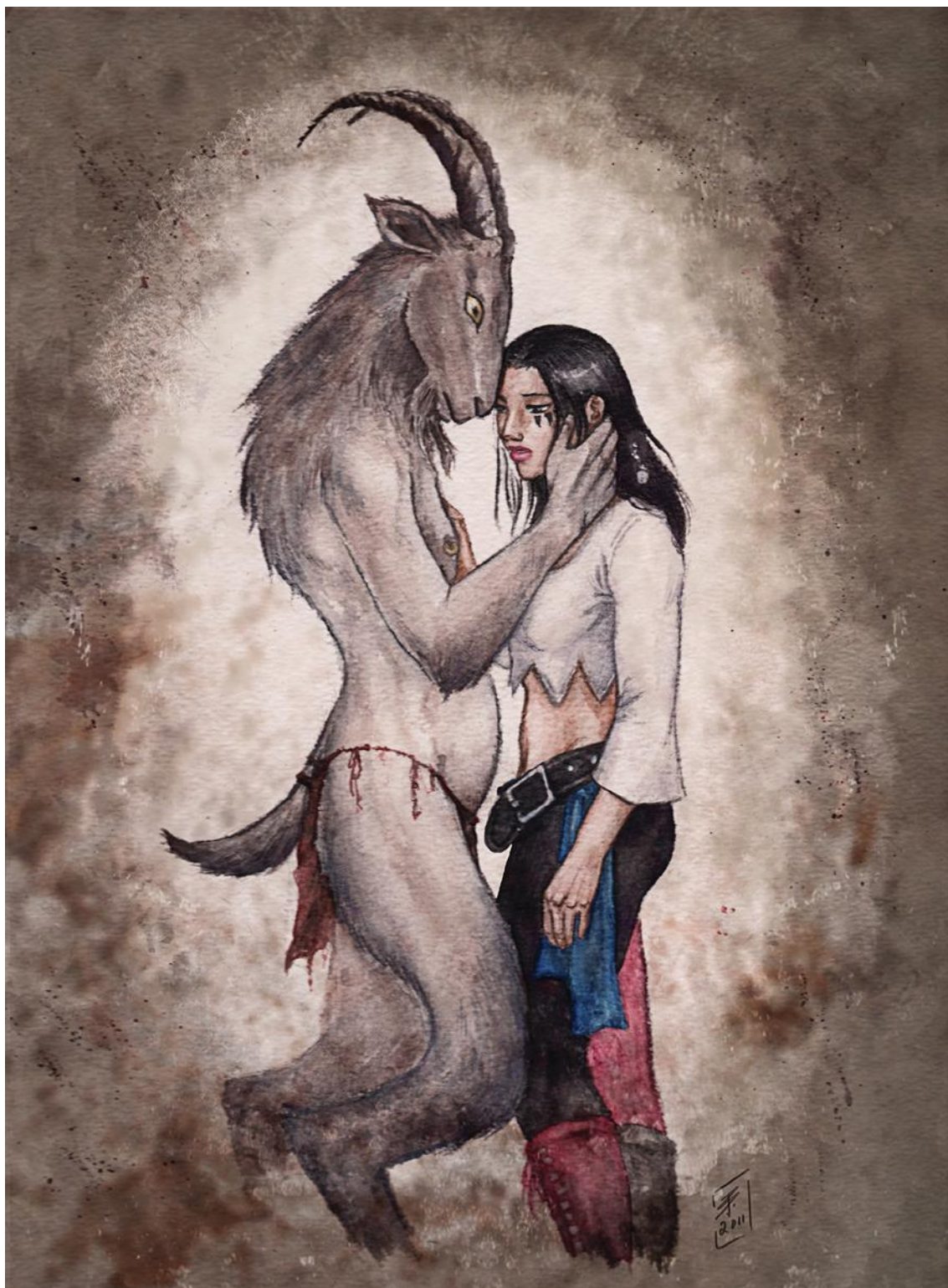


Finding Innocence

Digital mixed media print | 8 x 10" | \$30



Not the Real Thing
Watercolour and mixed media print | 9 x 12" | \$30





Halal Pork

Butcher yourself,
butcher all that shames you,
butcher your language
as a pig is deconstructed.
Butcher the words
to the roots under
the filthy mud over
which pigs roll.

Butcher this pork---
---break it down, don't build it up
mess it up enough
to bleed it dry
to be plate-able---
---to be palatable
enough
to sink your teeth into
the heart of this hearty
meal, vulnerably heavy
on the body it will perch on
as a fat bumble bee does
without crushing the paper thin
flower from which it draws
and reconstructs nectar.



Untitled



Heidi Wong
www.heidiwong.org



Guarded
Oil on canvas | 30 x 40" | NFS



Spring in Clinton
Oil on canvas | 25 x 35" | NFS



Artist Interview

Andrew Norris

Become acquainted with perhaps a few unknown dimensions – thoughts, ambitions, wisdoms, life changing moments – of this inspiring artist.



What is your art about?

My work is about the representation of masculinity from my childhood into adulthood. My earliest memory of the expectations of men is based on comic book superheroes, which influenced my understanding that men are supposed to be strong and dominant. As I grew older, I realized that I still had self-esteem issues

that were influenced by the visual representation of male bodies—like ones found in fitness and fashion magazines. I work with oil paint on canvas to create compositions of superheroes imposed over male celebrities that exaggerate the ideal macho culture of our society.





What project are you working on now?

I am going off the idea of the work from my series, Toxic Masculinity, and building upon it. I am still very much interested in the male form and painting advertisements found in magazines that promote the toxic manhood ideology. I have stepped away from flat backgrounds and colourful outlines for imagery from pages of my favorite comics growing up. My concepts are still familiar, but I am looking at my work in a more personal way now.

How has your practice changed over time?

In college, I took courses on painting such as the old masters learning the grisaille and the Venetian techniques. This way of painting was a slow process with a conservative outcome of a clean painting. As I continued painting each male figure in the series, I would shorten the process gradually by skipping steps as well as using different underpainting hues. The most prevalent difference in my work now is a shift from a general idea of masculinity to a more personal dialog about my gender expectations.

Creatively, where do you see yourself in the next five years?

Within five years I would have, hopefully, gotten my MFA degree from one of the nine universities I have applied to. I would like to think I would be employed by then as a professor or an adjunct professor, and if not, then work at a gallery or museum.

Describe a real-life experience that inspired you.

During college, I took a trip to Atlanta with a group of artists and went to a few galleries there. I was able to see a Phillip Guston and a Fahamu Pecou at the High Museum which was an incredible experience.

What is your strongest childhood memory?

The best memory that sticks out the most is my school's book fair, which had a book that contained all of the notable X-men. This allowed me to draw a full body image of many of the characters that are in my work now. I was always drawing; as a kid, I would usually close myself away with my comic books and just draw each character multiple times.

Which place in the world do you find to be the most inspiring?

Of the few places I have been to in this world, upstate New York was a very inspiring place during my art residency. I didn't do much work there because after graduation I needed a break.

What is your scariest experience?

In college, a group of some friends and I went into the lower levels of a building on campus. The building was abandoned and had a reputation for being haunted. It was around midnight when we went down the stairs, and we took out our phones to record the whole thing as we asked dumb questions. When we came back up we played the recording and a voice yelled back at us when we asked if anyone was there.

What superpower would you like to have and why?

I have always loved water-based abilities like Aquaman's powers. Even though it's not as impressive as Superman, there is always a job for Aquaman.

What's the most indispensable item in your studio?

Other than the obvious paint and brush, it would be music in the background.





Why do you do what you do?

I have found my artwork is a way for me to communicate how I was raised in an environment that encouraged a traditionally straight, male lifestyle. In the south, much like many places across the U.S., there is an assumption that we will stay in our small towns and raise children. There is nothing wrong with living that way; it's just not for me. I want to challenge those ideas by showing an overdose of maleness that achieves

an almost homo-erotic visualization. For me, this environment also establishes that men do not really show their emotions or talk about what they are dealing with; my work helps me express what I am going through and hopefully encourages others.

Andrew Norris was born in 1993 in Kingsport, Tenn. USA, and is currently based in Fall Branch, Tenn. USA. Visit andrewstephennorris.weebly.com.





CALL FOR
ARTISTS &
WRITERS

Call theme: LOST
Deadline: August 31
Applications: www.ArtAscent.com



