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AMERICAN
art
COLLECTOR



*Also Showcasing
Glass, Ceramics & Wood*

ANDREA KONCH



Confessions of a Blunt Artist

Penelope Gazin's art screams imaginative with a satirical edge and echoes back distorted images of traditional beauty eschewed by the grotesque while retaining the most primal and sensual elements of love and romance. The humorously disturbing depictions of women Gazin paints speaks about who she is as an individual in a much louder and discernible voice than most others. These graphic portrayals of sexuality and psychology can be described as repugnant mimicry of contemporary American culture. She reveals herself in a completely uninhibited manner, inserting herself into each work of art while retaining her *sui generis* sense of humor.

Never wanting to reveal too much at a time, she casually mentions that she comes from a long line of established and well-

regarded artists. Her grandfather, Barnaby Conrad, was one of the founding editors of *Art World* in the 1970s, and although he has passed his portraits still hang in the National Portrait Gallery. Her mother, Cayetana Conrad, is an established realist figure painter, and her older brother is none other than, Nicholas Gazin, the talented illustrator, and writer for *Vice* magazine.

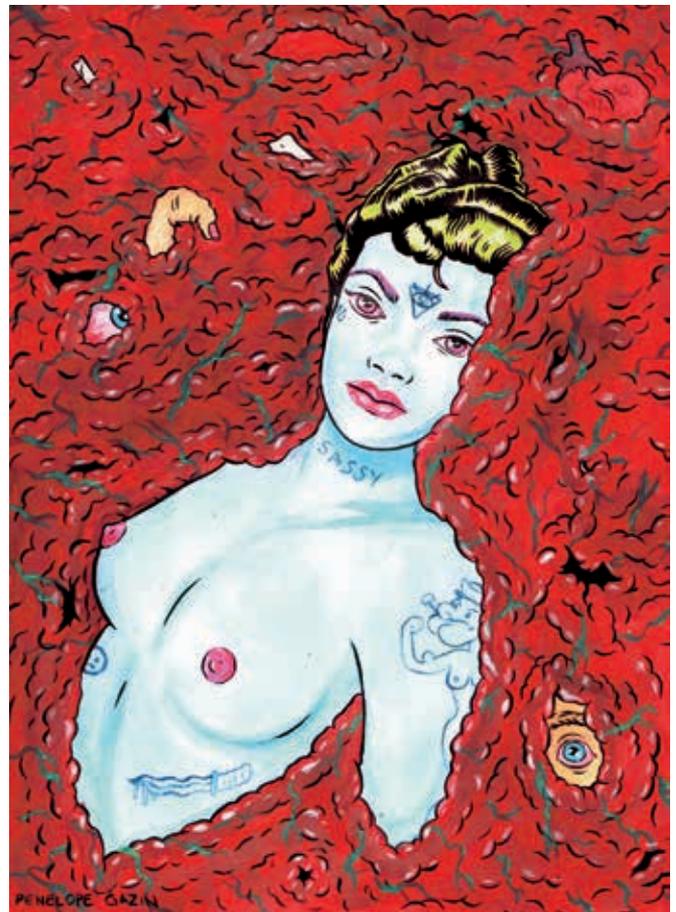
When asked about what it must have been like growing up in a family of artists, Gazin replies, "Having artist parents was cool, but kind of makes me feel less original, which I am OK with. When I was little my dad built us a detailed little playhouse that was supposed to be the witch's house from *Hansel and Gretel*. My mom painted the outside with giant candies and the inside with a fireplace with a witch's brew and a portrait of the titanic sinking. My

grandfather's house was the most magical house you could imagine. Trompe l'Oeil everywhere, including illusion hallways and bookcases and objects carved expertly from wood. He had life-size photorealistic cutouts of himself and his friends placed around the house. Parrots lived in his art studio and they shit all over his paintings and antique books."

One of the first things mentioned at the start of this interview process was Gazin's recent move from Los Angeles to New York City. By the end of the interview she tenuously mentions that she has landed two exhibitions at major galleries, one in New York and one in Los Angeles. Gazin is blunt with an apparent strong sense of self that is nothing short of utterly captivating. Says Gazin, "I'll be having my first art show in New York City at the



1



2

1
Dolly Infinity, acrylic and
ink on paper, 12 x 9"

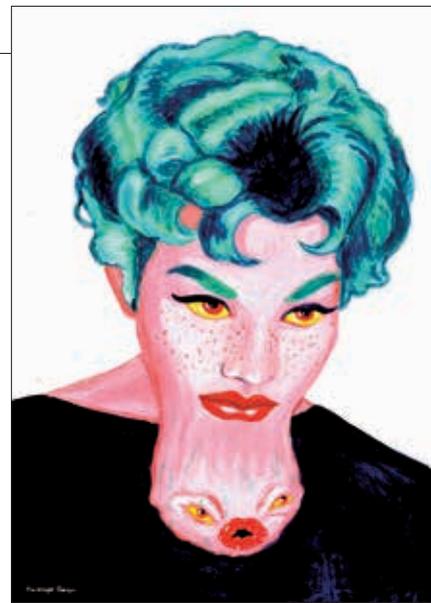
2
*I Want to Swim in Your
Meat*, acrylic and ink on
paper, 12 x 9"

3
The Burden, acrylic on
paper, 10 x 8"

Superchief Gallery this fall. The opening is September 3. My cat, Meatloaf, will be at the gallery sitting on a throne throughout the reception. There will be treats if you want to feed them to her. My dad will be

there doing magic tricks. There will be treats if you want to feed them to him."

Her other exhibition will take place at the Lethal Amounts gallery in Los Angeles on January 22 of next year.



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Interview with Penelope Gazin

By Sarah Elise Abramson

How does your art reflect you?

Every pair of eyes I draw in any painting is really my eyes. I don't think about why I'm drawing what I'm drawing, but it always reflects how I feel on the inside. It's therapeutic and I often learn a lot. Some of my paintings have my tears mixed in with them because I'm *that* artsy.

How does your art reflect the world?

I think it only reflects my world, which is the only world that matters to me because I'm a self-absorbed artist.

What have you been working on recently?

I've been working on a big animation job for *Vice* HBO, and that's been dominating my time. I really look forward to showing in New York though!

What is it about the grotesque and the oddly beautiful that you are so drawn to?

I lost my virginity in a patch of poison ivy and I had a severe blistering rash (I'm talking like bubble wrap status blisters) over 90 percent of my body for two months and I had to go on steroids and I was oozy and deformed and could barely open my eyes. I looked like a movie monster according to my dad. I couldn't go out in public for months and still have scars on my body from it. It's possible that, that was the best thing that has ever happened to me. Sometimes I make up stuff in interviews (depending on my menstrual cycle, of course), but this is actually a true story.

Describe your present life in a few short words.

Sad, proud, lucky, independent, sassy, anxious, horny.

Can you recall a favorite memory from your childhood? What makes it your favorite?

I loved watching the squirrels chase each other on the tree that was right next to the window by my crib. I used to watch them in the morning and apparently "scweer" was one of my first words. One time my dad choked on some water at the dinner table and accidentally threw up. That's not a good memory per se, but it's also not a bad one.

I know it's a tough and broad question, but what does art mean to you?

Art allows me to communicate with the world and myself, and I'd probably hate myself if I didn't make art.

How long have you considered yourself an artist?

I was causing some trouble for my mom while she was pregnant with me because I kept flipping around in the womb. I was trying out different options and also I do what I want.

What keeps you so motivated and driven to never stop creating?

The best thing in the world is to be perma-heartbroken. You can make so much beauty with so much pain. Also George, if you're reading this, I hope you're doing well (not). ●

Sarah Elise Abramson is a contemporary fine art photographer based in San Pedro, California—a mysterious post-industrial enclave whose offbeat countercultural history and proliferation of unusual sights, sounds and citizens is tailor-made for Abramson's obsession with everyday surrealism. In both her own photography and in her curatorial and editorial approach to exhibition projects and independent publications, her emphasis is on discovering the eccentric beauty in the things most people overlook. Found objects, hidden messages, secrets of the universe that hide in plain sight—throughout her studies at Parsons The New School for Design and Brooks Institute of Photography, and later at LaChapelle Studios, her work has evolved from finding to intuitively creating original daydreams and shared cosmologies.

