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13 Questions for Laura Krifka

By Tracey Harnish Sat, Apr 21, 2012



Did you draw when you were a kid/what age did you start?

True story: In the first grade we had this amazing “artist” in our class named Miguel. We all really admired him. So one day I did this epic full color drawing of a pirate ship under attack. Complete with undersea mermaids and alligators attacking the drowning pirates. Pretty intense. I showed the drawing to Miguel and he said it was really good. So I asked him:

“Well?”

“Well what?””

“Are you gonna make me an artist or what?”

Without missing a beat Miguel asked me to kneel, placed his pencil on either side of my shoulders and said, “I dub you, an artist”. I like to think my career began then, at the age of seven.



What has been your biggest sacrifice for art?

The biggest sacrifice has been the freedom that comes from not being totally obsessed and in love with doing something. I haven't traveled at all in the last five years, gone out much, or anything like that. There is always something more important happening in the studio that keeps me from the joie de vivre I might otherwise be experiencing. But at this point, if the toss up is sangria at the beach and all consuming passion- I side with passion.

What artists that aren't dead, influence you?

I think the most obvious influence is John Currin. I think we both use the body in a really cruel way. I admire his brutality. I also think Amy Bennett is fantastic. I love how subtle and quiet her narratives are, and how the more time you spend with them the larger and more menacing the potential story lines become. I absolutely love Shary Boyle's porcelain figurines. She inspired me to start exploring sculpture. Lastly, Kara Walker. Her work genuinely frightens me. In particular her videos, and anything that can disturb you that much is worth a lot more exploration.



What artists that aren't dead, really bug you?

I don't like when artists have dogmatic views on what art should and should not be. As if there are rules. That always seems futile and sad to me. I think it is fine to not like something, to even hate something, but to superimpose that your view should be everyone's view is irritating. I also don't care for art that's just trying to stay one step ahead of the next big thing. I like work that communicates an intense personal drive, vision or compulsion, not ones own art world savvy.

What do you listen to while you work?

The thing I listen to the most is Marc Maron's podcast, "What the Fuck". He interviews comedians or people connected to comedy and it is really brilliant. As far as music goes, at the moment the favorites are: Dom, Kurt Vile, Best Coast, Wavves, The Cults, Black Francis, Interpol, The Smiths, The Cure and the Violent Femmes for good measure.



What are you working on now?

I am in the brainstorming phase for my show at BravinLee that will open next year in New York. This last show, "First Blush" was inspired by romance. A corrupt messed up rape-fueled kind of romance... but romance none-the-less. For these next few pieces I am thinking a lot about calamity, disaster and sacrifice. Specifically, the way that tragedy and theatricality can combine. I think there is a lot of rich territory there.

What was the last show you saw?

I saw Alina Szapocznikow "Sculpture Undone" at the Hammer last weekend. I wasn't familiar with her work and I was completely blown away by the expansiveness and intensity of her objects. Also I want to make lamps now too.



What's the most indispensable item in your studio?

This is going to be the girliest answer, but my hair tie. If I forget something to pull my hair back I feel like it ruins the whole day and I can't think. I inevitably dip my hair into a large glob of paint or into hot glue. I accidentally dyed part of my hair red on one of those days. Disaster.

What is it that is spurring ideas for your work these days?

Every time I make one piece it opens up a door to three other projects. Very rarely am I without an idea.



Do you collect anything?

Nothing actually. I do have a very large amount of books and records. Those are chosen based on taste rather than commercial value or rarity though.

What are you reading right now?

I forbade myself to read while finishing up my show. When I am reading it becomes all consuming for me, so when I have a deadline I have to regulate it. With that said, once my show was finished I immediately dove into very easy reading. Last weekend I read "The Hunger Games" series. This week I read "The Handmaid's Tale". Right now I am trying to tempt myself back into the big kid books. I just picked up "Humiliation" by Wayne Koestenbaum.



What do you like to do when you aren't in the studio?

I am very into my dog Miles. He is a Maltipoo... which is embarrassing to have to say, but he is hilarious and we are together all of the time. Right now he is growling at a rock he found in the backyard. My husband-to-be and I go birding. It's like hunting without having to kill anything. I really like gardening but I tend to either kill what I am growing or the plant gets out of control and I don't want to deal with it anymore.

What's your favorite post-gallery meet up or restaurant?

Grand Casino in Culver city. They have the greatest corn chowder known to man. Also they have a lot of desserts, and dessert is a must have for me.

Krifka is having a solo show in April of 2013, at BravinLee programs in New York. To learn more about Krifka's past shows go to her gallery website at [CB1 Gallery](#).