

HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS

TEXT AND INTERVIEW
Danna Takako

PHOTOGRAPHY
Manfredi Gioacchini

EXPLORING ARTISTS' HEAD SPACES VS. LIVING SPACES

The place where you live and work can often say a lot about the inside of your mind. Somebody who is uptight and punctual will most likely have a dust-free, clutter-free office. People who are foodies generally have tightly-packed shelves in their kitchens. The little details say it all.

But with artists being unconventional types, things can be a little more difficult to predict. Some artists who do the most painstakingly detailed, anally retentive work have their studios in permanent disarray, while an artist exploring the dark and seedy side may work in an airy studio filled with light. Perhaps an artist's inner search is borne out in these contradictions.

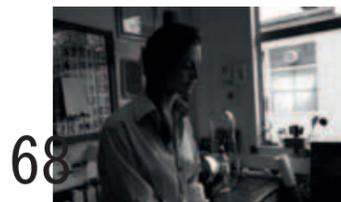
Photographer Manfredi Gioacchini went to visit seven artists in their creative homes in London and Rome to see how their workspaces reflected their head space (and vice versa).

CELINA
TEAGUE



With art as complex, theatrical and trippy as Celina Teague's, it is surprising to discover that she leads such a simple, peaceful life in London. Most of her days revolve around paintbrushes and canvases, her rabbit Gretl, cycling along canals and training for triathlons. It is an interesting contrast to the dense narratives found in her paintings, such as an abstract upside-down human face holding up what looks to be a bee hotel. Or a colourful, hallucinatory take on Noah's Ark.

ADELINE
DE MONSEIGNAT



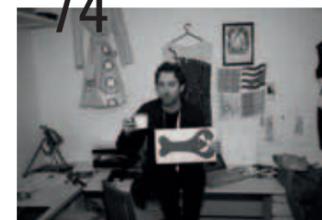
Some artists have studios that mirror their delightfully fantastical, otherworldly and challenging visions. Interested in strange body parts and ever gravitating towards the uncanny, Dutch-French artist Adeline de Monseignat takes materials out of their comfort zones and does the same to her audience. Mixing up the senses and questioning the barriers that society sets, in her piece "Touching With The Eye," she utilises fur that looks so soft and palpable it just begs you to touch, but you can't. It is enclosed inside a glass ball. In her installation "Death of The Artwork", meanwhile, she made visitors walk over broken eggshells inside a coffin.

HENRY
HUDSON



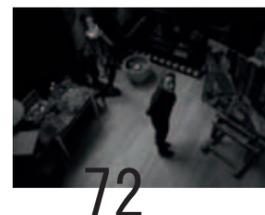
Henry Hudson is every bit as quirky as his art suggests, both in his daily routine and his personality. The son of sculptor Richard Hudson is just as satiric, ironic and playful as his paintings, which peel back the veil and force a brutal look at some of the less posh and pleasant sides of England. He continually finds ways to humble and confuse the art world, using plasticine for his paintings and creating resin sculptures with human hair collected from London's trains.

PHILIP
COLBERT



Seeing – and hearing – the work of designer Philip Colbert, one can't help but imagine his studio to be a colourful bubble of daydream and flight, similar to his defiant Pop Art fashion creations and the wry music of his "fashion band" The Rodnik Band. Though some of his quirky designs are hung on the walls behind his desk, white walls and desks in general don't seem appropriate for such an eccentric mind. You'd expect him to exist in a world as divergent as his fashion signatures (which have caught the eyes of Gaga and Lagerfeld): more along the lines of his all-sequin shark dress (with two cartoonish eyes on top of its hood and pointed teeth in the hood lining), his 'Campbell Soup Can' dress, or the Marcel Duchamp-inspired, handmade 'Urinal Dress.'

VANESSA
GARWOOD



The studio of Israeli-turned-Londoner Vanessa Garwood conjures up a feeling of evocation similar to her work. Through her portraits, paintings, drawings and sculptures, she explores the role of humans in nature, and our disconnection from it, showing both our animalistic tendencies and how we relate to one another. Her art has a remarkable amount of character and texture, as does the creative studio into which she escapes every day.

ALESSANDRO
CICORIA



Photographer Alessandro Cicoria spends much of his time inside his aunt's wondrous time capsule, The Hotel York in Rome, using it as a home, a studio and a solid base for his work. His debut photovoyage 'Hotel York' is proof. With a cinematic touch and a strong narrative weaving throughout each of his photos, it seems only fitting for him to live amongst the surreal yet beautiful characters that the picturesque hotel holds. His life is, quite literally, an extension of his art, playing with real-life ephemeral moments in photography, video work and installations.

PIETRO
RUFFIO



Rome's Pietro Ruffio brings an ethical and moral side to his work, calling upon history, politics and philosophy to drive his drawings, cuttings and carvings. His work holds as much passion and humility as the artist himself, and his art travels around the world as much as his ideas. His "Topographies of Silence" project, for example, came from his travels to North Ossetia, where he worked with child survivors of the Beslan school hostage crisis of September 2004. Seeing Ruffio crouched under his current installation in his home studio is a bit like watching an animal in its natural habitat, the air feeling rife with the one idea he so often explores in his work: freedom.

CELINA TEAGUE

ARTIST AND PAINTER. BASED IN LONDON
celinateague.com

Please introduce yourself...

Amongst other things, I am painter.

How would you describe your art?

Complex, vibrant and a little bit bonkers.

What are you currently working on?

I have two solo shows coming up in London this year, 'Brave New World Hits a Glitch', in the Rook and Raven Gallery in April and another in ArtEco Gallery in September. I am also taking over part of an empty space in the east end for the next five months – where I have been given free reign to curate shows and invite artists to use it as a project space. No doubt I will host the odd Talking Dogfood there too. Talking Dogfood is an event I co-founded, in which speakers are invited to let loose, for fifteen minutes each, on subjects that they are passionate about but not expert in. They are usually pretty raucous affairs.

Were you always drawn to art?

I have always been a creative person and was very much in my own fantasy world as a kid. I started writing my first book on a type writer aged 9. Naturally it was illustrated. At secondary school art and drama were my favourite subjects and I slept with an easel in my bedroom so I could paint well into the night. I liked literature as much as I liked to paint and decided to study English and drama at university. There, as well as acting, I got involved in writing plays and directing and for a while seriously considered theatre as a career option. It was spending my third university year in Berlin that set me on the path I am now. It was there, living on a street bustling with art galleries and artists, that I got back into painting in a way that was much more than a hobby. That, followed by

a year studying art in Oaxaca, the arts capital of Mexico, left me convinced that there would be no greater fortune than to spend the rest of my life painting.

Does the idea come first, or is your approach more experimental?

It's hard to pin-point the birth of an idea. Although each painting or drawing is an experiment, my paintings are often a continuation of each other. I finish one and want to push a certain aspect of it in a different conceptual or technical direction. Although I work in a sketchpad I don't map out what I do. I need to feel I'm on a knife edge and that comes from not knowing exactly where I am going.

What message(s) do you want your art to carry?

I approach my painting from an activist's standpoint. I look at the biopolitical not just as a relationship with the environment but as a relationship to the self. As such my activism moves within the radically personal sphere. I am deeply preoccupied and interested by the state we have gotten our environment into such as global warming, deforestation, polluted and overfished seas, a casual disregard for animal welfare and so on. I myself am part of the problem. My practice revolves around exploring the complex structures of our belief systems, addressing this ambiguity of our known knowns and our unknown knowns. If people connect my work with the environmental movement, that could only be a good thing.

Where do you go for inspiration?

Into my studio and then into my head.





ADELINE DE MONSEIGNAT

FRENCH ARTIST BASED IN LONDON
adelinedemonseignat.com

Please introduce yourself...

Adeline de Monseignat; a daughter, a sister, a friend, a lover, an artist but mostly a human being curious about life, people, textures, feelings and you.

How do you describe your art?

Given my interests in human behaviour, the body and the senses, I describe my work as something one should respond to instinctively, because my work is about all the wonderful strangenesses of being alive. The way we feel, think, talk, move, touch, have sex, our bodies' outstanding ability to reproduce and give life, and for that cycle to start all over again. It is of no surprise that the word Life comes from the German 'Leib', which means 'body', for it is through our bodies that we experience life.

I aim to explore this through materials and turn them into 'creaptures', creapture-sculptures that strives for holding a sense of life. Over time, my work has managed to define itself through a clear triple-stranded 'DNA' structure: the Uncanny (the ghostly, the double, the unfamiliar...), the Origin (the beginning, motherhood, birth...) and the Contact (interaction, space, the senses...); each thread responsible for the human being's means of testing life, giving life and feeling alive. I encourage materials to fulfill their full potential, either by enhancement of their qualities – the tactility of fur, the fragility of glass – or by deception – defying gravity with magnets, mimicking breath with motors. Physically, this translates into organic and biomorphic sculptures, installations and drawings that seek to provoke the senses.

Have you always been drawn to art?

I can't remember not being into it. Although as a child you don't think of it as 'art', this

form of investigation and expression is simply an incurable curiosity towards life that takes different shapes: at some given moment as drawing, at other times perfume making, stone collecting, etc. 'It' always seems to involve exploration whilst playing. It is only later on, as an adult, that we embrace 'it' as 'art'. However, there are specific events and encounters that have stayed with me.

My father also painted and I would often pose for him. It had almost become a complicity thing between him and I. Then one day he left and I was the one who picked up the paintbrush.

What can you share about your creative process?

My practice is an ongoing and non-exhaustive investigation, which does not aim at providing any set resolution but rather offering a set of suggestions. Every piece I make feels like a physical proof of that ongoing research. Each work teaches me something new, or reinforces a prior observation, and leads me onto the next work. So my entire body of work has main continuing threads, even though it might physically take different shapes. Sometimes a sketch comes before a sculpture; at times a drawing comes after; often a drawing will actually be a work of its own but always does a work come to life with narrative and documentation. Playing is also key to successful making.

Where do you go for inspiration?

To bed. 90% of my most interesting thoughts come during that state of semi-consciousness when finally the mind is able to process all that has been stocked throughout the day. So even though inspirational encounters may happen at any given time, it is at night that the alchemy of inspiration works its magic.



HENRY HUDSON

ENGLISH PAINTER BASED IN LONDON
20projects.co.uk

Describe a typical day in the life of Henry Hudson...

Tea, more tea. Buy some tea. Drink the tea. Pray to the tea lord. Make my girlfriend a tea. She hates it when I make her tea as apparently I get the mixture between milk and sugar wrong and the length of time I should leave the bag in for. So she always throws it down the sink. That makes me sad.

What can you say about the city you grew up in?

Hunting and killing on the Moores with my own hands at a young age. I could only go into art or a cave.

What are you currently working on?

I'm converting an old hair dressing salon into a studio. It's rather like Julian Schnabel's house in New York. Only 1,000 times smaller and surrounded by KFC restaurants.

What do you enjoy about using paint?

I don't use paint I use plasticine. I love it because it smells great and it's my own private fuck you to the art establishment. Gets me out of bed in the morning. For the time being anyhow.

Does the idea come first, or is your approach more experimental?

Both. Sometimes it's more exciting to jump without looking. Other times it's best to look

and get that feeling like you're going to shit yourself.

What message do you wish your art to carry? What footprint would you like to leave behind?

Art for me now could be different for me tomorrow. It has no house. I love the power of art to inspire others. I make it because I simply like to feel and look. Have life on your finger tips. It's a drug. So one needs his/her fix. I'm not sure of my foot print. Ironically if I look at all my work together I hate it. Oddly though at some point I loved all my children when I created them. So on a whole I hate myself. But on a working day I don't mind the things that slip out. Once you're high and in the clouds it's fine isn't it? Then you have a big come down. Making art is like that. Someone has to come along with a shovel and scrape you off the ceiling.

Who are your inspirations – be it musicians, authors, film directors, philosophers?

All of them. I'm more interested in the person than the art. After all they are the ones that make the work. People are everything to me. What a joy to have dinner with someone that's lived properly.

What do you love about London?

It's where Her Majesty lives. You have to be where the party's at.

VANESSA GARWOOD

ENGLISH PAINTER BASED IN LONDON
vanessagarwood.com

How would you describe your art to someone who has never seen it before?

I am an English artist that grew up in Israel; I paint and sculpt from life and have a studio in London. The art school that I went to, in Florence, taught me a very technical and classical method so the way I work has old-fashioned roots which I try to keep moving forwards and changing.

What are you currently working on?

I am working on a series of large oil paintings, inspired by children's stories (ranging from Aesop's fables, Sturupeter, Grimms and old African Folk Tales). These stories often encourage a rebellious approach which values self-preservation and cunning above morality. The stories are universal and I love the timelessness of mythic writing which everyone can understand and remember or relate to from their own childhood.

What does working with paint allow you to express?

Oil paint is interesting because it can be very unrestrictive, as it allows you to change your mind constantly, but it is also very complicated technically. What I love about it is how you can never learn enough and that there is so much history and so many different approaches to discover that there is always something to develop and think about as a painter.

What other mediums do you enjoy?

I also work in clay for my sculptures which is a totally different process – being much more

premeditated (as you have to build armatures and plan the weight distribution) and more physical than painting as you have to move around so much to see every angle. I have also done a bit of etching, animation, manga cartoons, logo design, set design – it's more fun to keep it varied.

What can you share about your creative process?

I always work from life, and use daylight, setting up scenes in my studio and renting costumes from the national theatre warehouse which I have planned and sketched before in composition and colour schemes – but I always end up changing the initial idea a lot as I go along as it never turns out how you expect it.

What are your interests beyond art?

I go to see a lot of dance and theatre as much as I can, I also work for an amazing charity called Dramatic Need – we build arts centres in sub-saharan Africa and send creative volunteers out there to teach workshops.

Who are your inspirations?

At the moment I am really inspired by Paula Rego, for the way she tells stories and her dedication to painting from life. I always love looking at Sargent, Velasquez, Van Dyk and Goya for how they handle paint so beautifully. Then also I do love other mediums like Anish Kapoor's sculptures, the animation of Sylvain Chomet (*Belleville Rendezvous*), Ralph Steadman's *Alice in Wonderland* illustrations, and Giacomo Manzoni's reliefs.





PHILIP COLBERT

DESIGNER BASED IN LONDON
therodnikband.com

How would you describe your work to a stranger?

I have a fashion label called Rodnik. And I create pop art inspired clothes and accessories. I think I am a kind of Satarist. I often present my work in a satirical context, from forming the world's first fashion band and touring my shops (I write spoof pop/fashion songs based on the collections, such as 'London Clothing'), or using lookalike celebrities for Rodnik publicity stunts. I am a sort of anti-fashion designer; I think of clothing as a fun way to express creative ideas not follow trends and fashion cycles. My designs are more a humorous play between art and fashion. I think the closest we come to truth is by shaking the cage and embracing the ridiculous nature of things.

What sorts of ridiculous adventures do your days typically hold?

Green tea over breakfast, then walk down Goldbourne road towards the studio, try to stop myself buying weird objects and curiosities from the antique markets or stands on Portobello road. Occasionally buy strange watercolours and doodle on top of them, such as kitsch British countryside landscapes and then draw cartoons – like lobster repeats on the sky, or rainstorms of swiss cheese. After messing around, I go through tasks for

day with studio team, and then drink lots of green tea.

What does fashion allow you to express, as an art form?

I feel it has been less explored as an art form. Lots of fashion designers push the technical boundaries to an art form such as McQueen etc, but I felt drawn towards a more literal conception of clothing as wearable art. For me if a woman walks into a private view wearing a Rodnik urinal dress, the art is alive in a new dimension! I always liked the quote that "if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

What can you say about creativity?

Ideas tend to collect by a sieve effect in the mind. And good ideas tend to lead you to more good ideas. Most days we tick along with evolving the world of Rodnik symbols and pop art references that we translate onto clothing and bags.

What messages do you want to leave behind?

Be bold, and walk on new ground, mix genres, bridge gaps, redefine things. This is the essence of the evolution of language. Think of Gilbert and George the singing sculptors.



ALESSANDRO CICORIA

PHOTOGRAPHER BASED IN ROME
alessandrocicoria.tumblr.com

What's special about the place you grew up in?

I was born in Giulianova, a small town on the Adriatic Sea. Its wild places, the purity of the land and its people often come back in my imagination.

What are you working on today?

I'm working on a video project related to the York Hotel, (a place that occurs in several projects); and on a photo project: a kind of a laboratory investigation on the Tevere river, in Rome.

How did you first discover photography?

When I was child I used to follow my father in his screen printing and darkroom laboratory. But my real interest in fixing the image and mystifying it, came when I was a teenager, looking at the details in the sky. The photography seemed to be the quickest way to do it.

What do you love about the medium?

I am interested in the connection between the objective and mechanical sensitivity of every man. In the experimental phase you can change even the last degree of objectivity of photography and enter in the subjective analysis, the complete mystification of the subject impressed.

For you, is creativity instinctual or do you preplan shoots?

I have a method. Several works come through immediate intuitions, other came after several manipulations.

Are you interested in redefining what is or could be beautiful?

Diderot wrote that the sense of aesthetics and beauty are the result of a "relationship" between the art object and the perceiver with its own individual sensitivity. It would be interesting to predict how beautiful is perceived, imagining a hypothetical viewer of the future, trying to satisfy the contemporary look.

Do you have a message within your visual expression?

It is really difficult to focus a message, they are insights into the sum of some contingencies. When I start thinking about a new job I immediately try to place it in the exact spot on the horizon.

How does Rome inspire (and discourage/frustrate) you as an artist?

If there are frustrations in general they are internal, and not caused by external factors. Rome is the perfect city for an artist today.

Where do you go in the city for inspiration?

In my studio in front of the Tevere river. In the city with its swampy aura, museums transversely illuminated by the sun, even in winter, and the Hotel York.

PIETRO RUFFO

ITALIAN ARTIST BASED IN ROME
pietroruffo.com

How would you classify your art?

My work is mostly on paper, with drawings and cut-outs, and creating large-scale installations.

How has the city you live in shaped you?

I grew up in Rome, which is a very special city because it is layered: every age has been built on the ruins of earlier times. This idea of layering came a lot in my work.

What have you been working on lately?

The projects that I'm making now are on the concept of freedom. Especially at this time I'm making work on the Arab Spring and the great energy that the movement has spread worldwide. I am preparing an art residency in Miami and some exhibitions around the world.

Can you remember a moment when you realized that art was your calling?

It's difficult to define a precise moment in which you choose to do your activities. I think that, like any job, there's a part of life due to chance and an innate part that brings you to your passion. However, my grandfather was a painter, my father an architect, and my mother a designer, so I have not moved so much.

Do you remember your first art project as a child?

I remember that I was 13 years old in a drawing course in which I thought to be very good. The teacher gave me a low rating in my first drawing. It marked me a lot and I was encouraged to restart from zero and try to do better. From that day drawing has become my daily obsession.

How would you describe your artistic approach – is it experimental?

I have a degree in architecture and then my work as an artist is all designed before, and divided into different execution times, in a meticulous process that unfortunately does not leave much space for 'improvisation.'

What message do you hope to carry with your art?

I think more than a message, art should help to pose questions.

What are your most proud achievements, as an artist? And as a person?

As an artist, I am always surprised at where I managed to get. I'm not ambitious, so everything that happens seems to me more than I deserve. As a person, my son and my wife.

What are some of your goals for the future?

In the future I hope to remain constantly amazed by the things that I make, as if I had not made them, but someone much better than me.

