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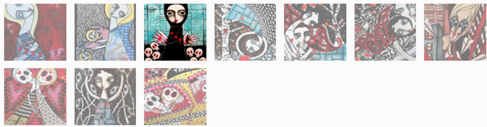
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Danielle Charette: "I Challenge Myself by Letting Chaos Rule."

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Danielle Charette is a Contemporary Expressionist who shuffles between Pennsylvania, where she was born and New York City. Her work is a highly symbolic form of modern story telling meant to convey her life experiences and evoke emotion in the viewer. Several sub-cultures as well as her French heritage and the Pennsylvania Dutch heavily influence her work. It is an evolution of her love of love, iconic shapes, folk art, dias los muertos, religious iconography, poetry, playing cards, symmetry, vintage deco and art nouveau design, old horror films, the sea, tattoos, old school skateboard culture, gothic and punk rock music and clowns.

Charette's original oil paintings and art have been shown and hang in many galleries throughout the US and hang in many private collections throughout the world. Notably, her series "2752 It's Always the Same" and "Broke in Brooklyn" have been accepted for inclusion by The National September 11th Memorial Museum.

We had the opportunity to ask Danielle Charette a few questions about her artwork. Here's what she had to say:

My biggest challenge as an artist is living in my head. I have quite the imagination and a constant influx of thoughts, stories, imagery and ideas that buzz around up there flying at me all hours keeping me from sleep. As a painter of stories, I create in series where each piece tells a portion of a tale until a story is complete or a particular emotion I'm feeling isn't needed anymore. The most important piece in any series of my works is the opening piece where the story begins. When in this state it can be difficult to sort through all the chaos and focus all that energy into beginning a new series of works. When I can't calm my mind enough to find a starting point, I challenge myself by just going with it and letting chaos rule, grabbing anything that is close to me to make bizarre and random pieces of art that are non traditional, non-identifiable as mine and highly experimental. These experiments usually lead to new processes I integrate into future works that help my work grow. Often these sessions calm my thought process to where I can see clearly exactly what story I will tell next and exactly how and with which techniques and imagery I will do so. It's truly a "music soothes the savage breast" kind of thing.

My family and I have very recently decided to call Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania our permanent home after a lifetime in New York City and going back and forth between both homes the last few years. It was a very difficult transition for me at first although I was born in PA. Stylistically there is very little difference in my art whether created here or there, the main difference in working in two such diverse locations is more about my state of mind than geography. Having quiet and space has been refreshing after so many years of the go go go, and trying to squeeze art in, in cramped spaces with cramped time and my work has reflected that with a feeling of calm and harmony to it and a polish that I never seemed to achieve in New York. The dichotomy of both locations has begun merging and become more evident in my work of recent years. I present many folk art and iconographic inspired images in an urban way and my urbanity has been softened by these more rural influences. Over the last few years hints of the PA Dutch and and more nature inspired imagery have crept their way into my work which has made for an interesting evolution. I have found myself including elements such as trees, water, stars and birds instead of fire escapes, street signs, graffiti, trains and such. I have truly enjoyed the freedom of living more off the grid which once existed but can no longer be experienced in New York City.

In the end, you can take the girl from New York, but not the New York from the girl and I decided I couldn't stay here and leave my New York life behind. After careful consideration we decided to stay and bring a piece of NYC to Pennsylvania. We purchased a building and built and opened the Metropolis Collective. By doing so I get all the charm of Pennsylvania while being surrounded by a fabulous growing family of contemporary artists from all over the world. It has given me the best of both worlds where I can keep the wonderful things that worked for me in the city and let go of the things that didn't. I get to bring all of our NYC art and music family to us, which they all enjoy immensely and keep myself and our galleries on top of the pulse of the art world while also connecting with the local art markets. So in essence I suppose I will continue to create from both places. It will be interesting to see what direction my art takes in the coming years with this more "permanent" move to Pennsylvania although with the advent of the automobile and the worldwide web you really can be anywhere can't you.

I'm not certain what I imagine is at the end of the universe but if I close my eyes I see lots of eyeballs and stars. I was recently sent an article from an artist friend about how we, here on earth, are just all individual characters on some version of a SIMS-like video game being played by some uber-uturistic aliens that control every move we make in of our lives. I just hope if this is the case, the alien in control of me really likes what he's chosen to do with me and doesn't have a twisted sense of humor.

Thank you Danielle Charette for providing our most in-depth interview yet. We look forward to hearing more from Charette and the Metropolis Collective. To view more of Charette's work, check out her website.



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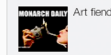


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