P R E F A C E

Paradox Ethereal is a bi-monthly digital magazine possessing a re-enactment character and related to the Arts, Romanticism and Symbolism. We flirt with Music - folk, ethereal, or experimental forms - Esoteric Traditions, Traveling possessing an exploratory character, Art in all its magnitude and types, the Absurd in full glory, everything Retro or Vintage, Nature, Literature, Psychology, Philosophy and above all the Transcendental. If a reader feels he is one of us we accept contributions. «The artist is the creator of beautiful things» Oscar Wilde said. Beauty is a fuel and imagination the vehicle. Welcome to the trip!

www.paradoxethereal-magazine.com
Alejandro Barrón

Painter Interview
Mexico
Mary Vareli: Alejandro, do you remember the first time you realized you wanted to be a painter?

Alejandro Barrón: It was just when I decided to get into the Art School.

You graduated from the National School of Arts, Mexico but you define yourself as self-taught, why?

As long as I was a student, I just worked at the lithograph workshop. I wasn’t into painting studios and unfortunately they didn’t give me the education I was looking for. Since 2004 I started with painting exercises by myself and that’s how I begin to settle down my profession.

What made you choose realism as a means of expression? Do you think this will change in the future?

Since I was working on graphic artwork then painting, I always went attracted by human figure. I worked a lot with portraits and I got more and more identified with body language, details, the flesh, textures, etc. I really do not think that this will change in the future...

I trace some elements of magic realism in your work as well. Am I right? A Little, I’m not only into mimesis, I like to represent people or objects in a subtle way into unusual environment. More than to relate something, I look for a gestured, symbolic and emotive artwork.

I noticed you do not try to idealize anything, you present the body with its flaws, the skin as it is, even cat personalities in their predator look. Are you fighting idealism?

I have no conflict with idealizing but I just don’t feel identified with. I think things are beautiful the way they are and it’s not necessary to distort something to make it interesting. There are so many details on the skin and the things around us to delight us for a lifetime.
Tell us more about your technique. Do you use experimental forms?

My technique is more traditional, I pick up traditional techniques and printed materials, I don’t experiment with them.

Your images balance between erotic images and darkness, introversion, symbols, occultism, curiosities, cats. What inspires you? Are these images part of your everyday life?

Sure, all of these are part of my daily life, that’s what I see and surrounds me. Darkness is a personal taste for the antiquity tenebrist painting, symbols just enrich the interpretation.

What is your painting routine?

I work throughout the day about 5 to 7 hours, six days at week.

You said that out of the 12 year you work only the last seven were successful. Why? What is the role of the Monterrey gallery in your career?

I have been painting for 11 years. The last seven have been the more productive because growing professionally I decided to begin exhibiting solo shows at 2007 and that increased my vision to keep on looking for art places.

Arte Actual Mexicano Gallery, from Monterrey, was the first one to bet on my work and have been selling out the major part of my pieces, that’s how I little by little started to be known better in Mexico and abroad.

I can tell you are unconventional as a personality, judging from your work.

I feel I’m a normal person, I just express my ideas the way I think it is more convincing.

Tell us about your best and worst exhibition experience. How do you feel during exhibitions?

I feel good at exhibiting my work, because I like to know I can transmit something to the others. There haven’t been a lot of bad experiences but when I consider that something’s not satisfactory I prefer to leave it out of my professional history.

I have noticed you do not participate in exhibitions and Biennales in Mexico. Why?

Sometimes I participated in competitions and Biennales with no favorable results so I stopped to spend my time in something that became unnecessary and preferred to focus on production and exhibition by myself. Recently I decided to exhibit once again in Mexico City.
Because of the museums and galleries that valued my work very little in the past and the little support and attention, I made the decision to fall away from the art scene in this city.

Do you sometimes face “the painter’s block”?

I guess not always ideas can flow like we wanted, but the best for me is to not put pressure on me and do some other things while the block goes away.

What is your advice to young painters?

My advice is to work hard and always with the goal to get better and to learn. Not to think about early success, if they don’t know the art trade yet.

Are you working on something new right now?

Yes, I’m working on some pieces for collective exhibitions for these first months of the current year. One painting will be part of the grupo Milenio collection here in Mexico with a project named “El Mural del Milenio”. Everything’s still on process…

Favorite writers? Favorite music?

Writers, Gabriel García Marquez, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka, William Shakespeare, Mario Benedetti, among a lot…


Other painters that inspire you?


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"painting is a dialogue with myself"
Mary Vareli: Tell us a few things about your studies and the period when you started painting.

Diogenis Papadopoulos: I studied Civil Engineering and currently I am a student in the School of Architecture. In terms of my relationship with painting, I can not track a specific period as I have always drawn. It is just that at times there is a greater need for expression.

In practice have these two aspects of your education intertwined in any way?

If there is any relationship, well, it possibly works completely unconsciously, as for me the profession of a civil engineer is the contact with reality, while painting is the creation of my own reality.

How would you characterize your style? Surrealism, pop art and expressionism prevail, right?

I wish I knew!

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

Everything revolves around man. From face to body movements. Sometimes the source of my inspiration is either a familiar face (the way one is standing, reading, reclining), or a photo, or even part of it.

You mentioned that painting is your psychoanalysis, can you comment on this? Do you have painting habits, or do you just do it when you are in the mood?

Painting is a dialogue with myself. It helps to find a balance in life. It is a stress buster, so I create the conditions to draw.

The way you use light and color in women figures is impressive, do you use models?

As I said before, I use models sometimes, which is not always feasible. Some other times, pictures.

Do you experiment with different materials a lot, or do you prefer to work within certain parameters?

I am fascinated by ink and acrylic paints, so they are prevalent in my work.

Your work Death & The Master communicates a special depiction of atmosphere that also influenced James Ensor. You said the project was inspired by movies of Alfred Hitchcock, yet I notice some sarcasm in this work.

A. Hitchcock is my first contact with the world of cinematic horror. When I was a kid, I first saw the film “Birds”; I was shocked but enjoyed it nonetheless. Over time, I found that within Hitchcock’s films, along with the atmosphere of Death, a mischievous mood is smoldering too. This is the feeling, I tried to depict in my project “Death & The Master”.
Do you believe your work is characterized by a kind of transition? Has your thinking and style changed at any time?

My job has changed over the years, while working. What I mean is that over time, my maturity, I think, is prevalent my work as well.

Have you created any comic books?

I've done some comic stories in the past. I do not know if I will do it again.

What are you working on in your studio right now?

I'm working on a project concerning authors of my favorite books.

Do you enjoy exhibiting your work? I noticed the way you present your works during exhibiting is part of the project, especially concerning the use of light and a sense of dimension.

The exhibition is a challenge on how to reconcile the work with the space, but it is also a nice sense to experience the immediacy of the public's reaction.

Painters you admire? I bet you love Egon Schiele.

You're right. I love Egon Schiele, as well as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edward Hopper.

Writers and philosophers?

Franz Kafka, Dashiell Hammett & Pascal Bruckner. These.

Frozen figures existing only in a parallel universe
Mary Vareli: Sonia, you were born in Florence and studied in the Florence Academy of Fine Arts, before your master in at international School of Graphic Arts the same city, how has Florence with its rich history in art has influenced your choice?

Sonia De Franceschi: Actually not so much. I have been drawing since I was three years old, so it was only natural for me to study art in the Academy of Fine Arts.

Tell us a few things about yourself and your creative nature. What inspires you?

My artwork is inspired by Celtic mythology, gothic music and literature, art nouveau and symbolism.

Can you comment on the printmaking technique you use?

Of course! First of all we draw on top of a zinc plate, previously covered with a thin layer of varnish, with a needle. Secondly, we put the plate in nitric acid for 20-30 minutes. Thirdly, we remove the varnish and we gently apply special ink to the zinc plate, and then clean the surface just to leave the ink in the design.

At the end of this process we print the image on a wet paper in a printing press.

Is the technique time-consuming or dangerous?

It’s not dangerous but you have to manage the acid with special care. This technique is very time consuming. It can actually take many months to finish the design on the zinc plate.

How would you characterize your style?

My style is characterized by imaginary figures, different scenes invented by me and inspired by art nouveau and Pre-Raphaelites paintings.

Favorite material?

In this period of my life, I’m using a lot oil painting. I use it with a palette knife, very spontaneously to achieve natural movements.

What is the role 19th century artists, and especially the Pre-Raphaelites and other Symbolists, played on your art?

A very important one, I love everything that has to do with 19th century. Not only art, but also lifestyle. I’m also very fond of the literature too.

The Celtic themes also prevail, right?

Yes, above all in my very first works.

You are the type of artist that seems to have experienced the topics reproduced. Do you travel a lot? Where? What did you”bring” back?

In some ways my art is an autobiography. The main subject is always a woman that resembles me; also, I travel a lot and those travels are very important for me, to get inspiration and use it in my artworks.
Since 2003 your etchings are not anymore inspired by Celtic mythology, or literary references. Have you created your personal artistic universe?

I hope so; at the beginning my inspiration was mainly gothic music, now I’m creating figures from my own ideas, imagination and thoughts that are deeply inspired by photography and literature.

You mention something that quite impressed me, can you explain it more for our readers? “The etching technique suits perfectly the irremissibly exigency of absolute bi-dimensionality, of evocative spaces and pure sharp outlines to reach a complete abstraction, to have a sort of “frozen-figure” existing only in a parallel universe”.

I still think that the “frozen figure” exists, but because we, as human beings evolve and change, I would have to say that, that figure has evolved in this parallel universe and now is full of color and rich paint; the color is thick and dramatic.

You also teach drawing and painting. What ways do you use to infuse your students with the love for art?

Regarding drawing and painting I do believe in the freedom of choice, this is why I let them choose their subjects and I guide them into their own personal projects and ideas in order to achieve the techniques that would suit them the most.

You are a prolific artist with many publications; what is the secret of your productivity?

I’m very strict with myself. I’m constantly working on my etchings and paintings; for me, is not only what I do but who I am.

Favorite painters?


Favorite authors and directors?

In literature: Zola, Guy de Maupassant,
Huysmans, James and Foster, and in Films surely Venders, specially Wings of desire (by far my favorite movie).

What is the role that music plays in your work?

A very important one, I love and always take inspiration from Gothic music.

How do you spend your free time?

Drawing and painting actually...Hahaha!

Any advice for young artists that would like to follow your steps?

Be confident in what you do and above all... work very hard. ✨

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"The work of Isis Rucé is a poetic plasticity, poetry itself, which becomes pictorial art through the creative act that invents a colorful world that surrounds and seduces us in its realization.

Her work is an introduction of wonder, balancing between alchemy, magical universe and figures taken from nature, vegetable or marine scalps, smoldering looks and touchable visions for the beloved; zoomorphic silences that are eternal, vigilant self and others, dreams lost in that space, delicate hands ready to build dreams on skin textures that reflect the time we live ".

Roberto Arizmendi R.
Mexican poet
Isis Rucé was born in Mexico City in 1972. From an early age she showed great interest in the arts. As she was the daughter of Jose Luis Russo, a painter inspired by the world of esoteric traditions, she was encouraged to use imagination, enriching her skills with stories and experiences of such kind.

The artist declares herself as self-taught, adopting a style of contemporary art, full of sensitivity and harmony, her work tends to be eloquent, as the depth of her strokes express poetry, magic, passion, love, melancholy, nature, despair and different aspects of life and death.

Her tendency towards fantasy art is combined with figurative abstraction, always in search of the human figure and endorsing the neat characteristics of classical realism and combining them with a purposeful Magic Realism style.

**HOME PAGE**
http://isisruce.webs.com
Mary Vareli: Jennifer, you are the daughter of the symbolist painter Jose Luis Ruissó, in what way has this influenced your decision to become a painter?

Jennifer Jennisel: I think that my father has been the most important influence for me to become an artist and especially a fantasy painter, he taught me to paint but also to see nature through the eyes of a fantasy language, I discovered that I could create new symbols to express things with a personal language where the limit is only creativity.

Was your father your only teacher?

He has been the most important teacher of painting for me, but I try to be always learning from every painter that I admire from different periods of art.

Your field of painting is fantasy art, tell us more about your choice.

Personally I like the freedom that I find in fantasy art very much, the infinite space for creativity; fantasy art uses languages like visual poetry, metaphors and many symbols, fantasy art came to me on a natural way, first because of the influence of my father’s paintings but also because when I was a child, my family lived in the country, the fact to be close to nature offered me everyday many beautiful spectacles which I could easily link to the world of literary classical tales of fantasy and also to legends and mythology.

Where do you draw your topics from?

Often I have an idea for a new painting or drawing, so I make sketches of this, I define the idea, and then I try to take this to the canvas, during this process I also look for sources that can be useful for the development of my work, I try to get elements like photos of models to study their anatomy, photos of nature and many things, sometimes I also work with real models and everything that can provide me with some visual information that I study and I adapt to my work through my own imagery, sometimes I also like to work using completely only my imagination without any study or reference of any model.

Your characters are mostly female ones, why?

I think that because I am a woman it is easier and more natural for me to express myself through female characters, sometimes they also work as a kind of alter ego for me, they are always interacting with their surroundings, even so, sometimes there appear also men on my paintings and they can also be the central topic, but mostly there are women.

When you paint a topic emerging from imagination, how do you visually keep in touch with this? Reading about the topic, visiting related places, listening to music, something else?
I think that a little from all of this; when I have an idea for a painting I try to get involved in all the elements that get me closer to this; I like to listen to music that creates a special atmosphere that I feel it gets me closer to the theme that I am painting, I also like to read or get information that I think it has to do with the theme of my painting, and if it is possible, I visit special places or get special things…I try to take and bring home everything that could be useful to make contact to the spirit from my paintings…

What is your painting routine? Waiting for your muse or painting every day?

Usually “I wait for the muse to come, but then I try to convince her to stay as long as it is necessary for that I get completely ready a painting,” yes, it happens that suddenly I have an idea about a new painting, so, I try to define this idea and to work on this very hard to try to get this completely ready, but sometimes it happens that “there is no more dialogue with the painting,” sometimes I just can’t make completely contact to this and then it is better to let it rest for a while and to wait for the moment when I can make that contact to this work again, sometimes I work with a single painting until I finish this, but usually I have various paintings that I am working along with; I work in one of them and then I let it rest for a while to continue working in another one.

Do you feel the need to experiment with other painting fields and themes in the future?

To experiment with other fields of painting and other themes is something that I used to do parallel to my own creations, I like to work in other fields of painting because this help me to practice and to develop more the elements like the technique, the composition, the colors, etc…”Painting is something alive that needs frequently to be fed from much work and new learning”.

Tell us more about the techniques you use.

I work mostly with oil painting and graphite drawing but I also work with other tech-
niques like watercolor, acrylic, and also pastel, scratch, charcoal, etc. Sometimes I also like to make experiments with a variety of new materials and different techniques...

You seem to place emphasis on feeling, like all true romantics do, do you share this opinion?

Well, I think that every kind of art is something that cannot happen without involve your feelings on this, painting for me is a very important needing in my life, is something that provides to me a space to express free my thoughts, my emotions and beliefs, painting is a possibility also to get away from the things that hurt me or that I don't understand, but it also offers a space for denounce, at the same time painting is a space to propose, to create and to have hope.

What else inspires you?

Everything that deeply touches my feelings is an interesting theme to express in my paintings; usually my paintings have a story to tell. I love the themes of fantasy, the universal mythology and literature, but I also like using symbols and imaginary characters to represent things that happen in my own life and have a strong impact on my soul; my son, my husband, my family. Also, sometimes, things that happen in the contemporary historical events of Mexico and the whole world.

You live in Berlin now. Do you also participate in exhibitions in Mexico?

Yes, I have much contact with Mexico and I still have participated in a pair of exhibitions there in the last years.

How has life in Berlin helped you in your art?

To live in Berlin has given to me the chance to have a deep contact to a very interesting city with a very strong spirit that speaks on its culture, on its History and its people, Berlin is a multicultural city with a very expressive character, I think that the resulting of this it has been that I have realized much more what I am, my ...“mexicanity”, I think
it is natural that sometimes I feel homesick and the echo of this is that actually there are more Mexican symbols and themes on my artworks, but by other hand, there are also new themes that have to do with the German culture, specially with mythology, legends and literature.

Your husband is the expressionist painter Willi Büsing. Is living with another painter the dream of every painter? Or creativity is an individual matter?

Well, personally I think that share life together with another artist can give you many great experiences because your couple share many similar interests to yours, your couple is also your colleague and this can have a very productive interaction and collaboration, but this condition also needs from much responsibility to be conscious that you are going to interchange frequently different points of view about art and the process to work on this.

On the other side I think that it is very important to keep your own creativity independent of the personal relationship and the work that sometimes you can do in collaboration with your artist-couple, for my husband and for me, those conditions have not been a problem because from the beginning of our relationship we were very conscious that we have different styles of painting and we have handled this condition with much respect, we have even worked together in a few paintings.

Do you enjoy exhibiting your work? Tell us about your exhibitions.

To exhibit my paintings gives me the chance to know the different interpretations that other people make about my work, is very interesting to talk directly to people because it also happens that some people help me sometimes to discover special elements on my paintings from which I was not so conscious about, I also like to see the different reactions and emotions that my work produce in others, I especially like when people don’t know that I am the painter and I am close to them to listen what they say about my work..

Painters that influenced you?

Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington, José Luis Ruissó, Jorge Quiroz, Sulamith Wulfing, Frida Kahlo, Ernst Fuchs, the surrealists, the symbolists, the pre raphaelites, the visionary art, the gothic art, the renaissance…

Favorite writers? Poets, Philosophers?

Italo Calvino, Gabriel García Márquez, Kafka, Tolkien, Shakespeare, the Grimm brothers. Arthur Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Alfonsina Storni, Roberto Arizmendi. The works from those writers and poets have provided me frequently inspiration to create some of my
I cannot say that I have a special favorite philosopher or school of philosophy to follow, more than this, I try to know, to understand and to learn a little from all of them, you can also learn everyday important lessons from the most unexpected people and circumstances.

**What advice would you give to a young painter?**

To be loyal to your own artistic ideas, to understand that painting is a way of life with many efforts to do but also with many spiritual satisfactions, painting is a dare for every day but it can also be an adventure and a shelter, painting can be a very jealous lover but also a friend, a confidant and a voice for your spirit, your painting will stay on this world when you will not be here anymore, your painting will speak about your dreams, your wishes and your beliefs. Your painting will be forever a portrait of your soul.

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I have always been interested in the universe and the stars. I was amazed by the titanic numbers involved in the universe. Symbolism, whether it is of the Mayan, Aztec, Egyptian, or Celtic, is constantly present in my work. I find the works of the ancients some of the most powerful work ever made. Those symbols are rooted in me from seeing them in my youth. While I may implement reason in the planning of my work, a feeling can move me and change the whole path of the painting. Ultimately, I paint the way I feel, not based on logic or convention.
Mary Vareli: Do you recall the first time you realized you had the need to paint?

Michael Kulick: I have been drawing in pencil and markers since I was 4 or 5, but when I was about 11 or 12 I first tried painting. I was fascinated by the artwork of the ancient Egyptians. I would draw Egyptian hieroglyphics onto very large sheets of paper and tape them onto my walls. My mother thought it was some weird phase that would pass, like my previous obsessions with the Statue of Liberty, Titanic, and the Empire State Building. So, the hieroglyphics were up but it wasn’t satisfying enough to me. I wanted to capture the scene of walking into one of lost great tombs of Ramses II. So I knew I needed the images of the large figures next to the hieroglyphics in order to get that overwhelming feeling I had when I first saw these images in my books. So, I asked my mother, who allowed me to actually draw the figures on my walls. All I had was pens and pencils and some crayons. Those were my tools up until then for drawing and sketching different things I saw. After going to the store, I got my hands on some acrylic paints. I painted the figures on my walls and I fell in love with the feeling of creating these ancient scenes. From there came studying paintings of the old masters from Michelangelo to Leonardo da Vinci. I had no teachers in this field. I was in my own world, content discovering new things at my own pace. It was a great time full of excitement and exploration.

Tell us about your first period of painting, mostly emphasizing on the creative thoughts emerging.

From the point I started studying the artworks of Michelangelo around 12 or 13 years of age, I was obsessed with drawing and painting figures from the Sistine Chapel and painting the marble statues he had created. I was all over
the map, drawing everything and anything that interested me. At that age I was not telling any kind of story though my art. I have always been interested in the universe and the stars. I was amazed by the titanic numbers involved in the universe. I remember a drawing I did when I took a car ride with my mother and father. We drove from NYC to Pennsylvania to visit some relatives for the weekend, and I wanted to capture a picture I saw of the Andromeda Galaxy in one of my favorite books to look at back then, which was Burnham’s Celestial Handbook. (Volume one, Andromeda through Cetus by Robert Burnham, Jr.)

I was amazed by the number of stars in the galaxy slowly turning into one big white ball of light in the center of the galaxy. So I took a blank piece of paper from the start of the trip and just poked dots on the paper near the center over and over for 3 hours until we got there. I had created something very similar, with the random marks falling mostly near the center focal point. These were the ideas and things I was curious about. I would look at each mark made in a drawing by Leonardo, then try to execute the work. I was always copying drawings out of national geographic magazines, books on animals, and I loved to draw the form and shapes of the human skeleton. The paintings back then were always followed by the many drawings and ideas that let up to the very few paintings I did then. From 14 or 15 my interest had shifted to music where my paintings became portraits of classic rock album covers and my favorite bands such as Aerosmith, The Beatles, Elvis Presley, and The Who. The paintings reflected this subject matter while my drawings were shifting into more original ideas. With geometric shapes bleeding into random quotes and deformed shapes of figures, my drawings were really the blueprint to my creative playing field, not painting.

When I was young my parents knew I could draw and my mother signed me up for lessons with a comic book artist in Queens, NY sometime when I was 8 or 9 maybe. I had one or two lessons with the guy and my mother stopped the lessons because it seemed all I was learning from the guy was how to draw the large breasts and figures of women in comic books. Another reason she stopped the lessons was she thought the artist was trying to change the original style I had into something very commercial.

My parents and other family members were good friends with the famous comic book artist Philip Eustice Blaisdell also known by Tex Blaisdell who did comic book drawings of Little Orphan Annie, The Green Lantern, and Batman. My family had me meet with Phil a few times and he watched me draw and told my mother I had a natural talent and I shouldn’t have a teacher try and teach that out of me. In high school my art teachers did not like me for my lack of doing any work they wanted out of me. I failed art in high school for doing my own thing. I didn’t want to do

You characterize yourself as “self-taught”, you have never taken any lessons?
basic things I had done on my own years before. Besides the one or two lessons I had with the comic book artist, I never studied with anybody or went to school for any art related subjects except the one painting class I had in high school. I always liked learning on my own with trial and error.

Comment on other media you use apart from oil painting.

I try many different things in my artwork. I love chess, which started a long run of making chess tables a few years ago. I love woodworking, from sanding wood boards down as smooth as I can make them for painting surfaces to building my own frames and stretcher bars for my canvas that I stretch myself. I made a really large chess table once that opened up to a black velvet holder for the pieces which I made myself with lead. I took the standard wood chess pieces you get in any chess set and hammered nails in the bottom making sure the nail hung out an inch or so from the bottom.

Then I got metal pipe covers with a closed bottom and one opened side. Then my uncle let me use a huge old box of fishing lures to melt the lead down and fill the pipe holder and quickly set the nail into the hot lead. After a few seconds the nail would fuse to the lead creating a huge chess piece with a unique bottom to it. I am a huge fan of horror films and the masks made for these movies. I got into working with clay first with a bust I did of George Washington, then Bela Lugosi. I was pleased with the clay busts, but I wanted to take it to the next step. I started collecting masks every time Halloween came around.

I loved setting the masks up and drawing it from different angles around the room. So then it was onto learning how to use plaster of paris to make a mold over my clay model. From there I bought liquid rubber to fill my mold and out came my first rubber masks.
I read many articles on how to paint rubber and apply hair with glue guns and all sorts of things. I made thirty to forty Michael Myers masks. I love the face of Myers, the blank expression is just amazing. It was a fun project trying to capture the face from tons of different pictures off the internet. I have made mixed media works with broken records, electrical wires, broken cd’s, spray paint, air brushing, pastels, chalk, acrylics, pieces of tires, pictures cut out of magazines glued straight onto the canvas.

Sometimes I like stepping on my artwork or dragging in the dirt for a nice effect. Whatever works to get the work where it should be, it’s all trial and error with no planned method. When I start planning things out I tend to lose the vibration of the work. That pulse or engine that drives the artist though a work keeping the frozen image and feeling in his mind until it’s complete. I made a work by cutting up ten decks of playing cards and placing the pieces all over the canvas, which led to individual photographs taken of this work for digital media works.

For example, I will take many photographs of certain thick oil abstract works I’ve made and make complete works of themselves which I call the Dream Series. The Dream Series is simply images I’ve made that most resemble in my mind my own dreams. The dark and light shapes contrasting all together really work for me, and I’m very happy with that project so far. I will showing a few of these Dream Series works soon in January at the Webber Gallery in Ocala Florida. I am always learning new techniques in order to execute to my maximum potential.

You mention your appreciation for the master, who is the master?

I have been growing and expanding so much over the last few years over the amount of art I am taking in and learning from. I see masters in many different areas of painting. First of all, in the renaissance period. I find Leonardo da Vinci to be the master of light and shadow. The way he captured the emotions on faces such as Lady with an Ermine. That painting is absolutely breathtaking with his use of sfumato, a painting technique where layers of glaze are built up to create a smoke like effect. He was able to capture the veins with a faint tint of blue under the skin and a bone structure under the skin which is incredible.

The suggested symbolism of sex and power by the presents of the ermine is classic Leonardo living in the times where expression of certain subject matters were taboo. Leonardo was the first artist I studied relentlessly. I would take books out from the library on Leonardo’s work and study everything about them, the brush strokes (or lack of I should say), the composition of the figures in contrast to the surrounding background and landscapes, the exquisite manner in which he captured folds in fabric and drapery, the countless anatomical drawings in that striking red chalk, the diversity of his inventions.

There are very few artists whose work can stand the test of time. Of the same period, and a bit different to me, was Michelangelo Buonarroti. From Michelangelo I got the understanding that one person’s talent combined with the utmost dedication can create some of the most awe inspiring works of art ever.
created. I love the way he draws his figures almost from the center out, like an energy is pushing outward creating the form of a human body. His drawings show a mind constantly in pursuit of perfection of the human form, such as the drawing (Studies for Haman) at the British Museum. When I am lacking ambition I find strength from looking over the works of his, from his pieta to the creation of Adam. I find him to be the master of the human form as a draftsman and sculptor. I also admire Diego Velázquez's way of capturing flesh tones in the human figure, Rembrandt's use of thick to thin oils, and how he captured the emotion in his figures. They are all masters in their own ways. Dali is one of my favorite artists for being able to create such a void and emptiness in his paintings while so much can be going on. I always strive for that in my work.

Being able to compile many different things into a painting yet have the whole painting carry a simplicity about it such as Dali's (The Great Masturbator). I always admired the long deep shadows in his work, they speak to me as if they are the remnants of some terrible nightmare haunting Dali's mind. Caravaggio is another master of light and shadow. His works always amused me from the tiny details of dirty fingernails to the sheen of heroic armor. He was an amazing talent who accomplished a great amount of work for somebody who died so young. Vincent Van Gogh in my opinion is the father of abstract painting. Most people overlook his drawings but he was a master draftsman. I see a lot of Van Gogh's work in my own. I love the thick oil paint and the way he uses it from thick to thin in the composition of his paintings. I have elaborated on this idea numerous times in my abstract paintings.

Love him or hate him, but Andy Warhol is another master of modern art. The simplicity and ideology behind his art work were groundbreaking. All these men are masters in all different areas of painting. I take what I can from them and build on it, in order to help guide me into the artist I want to be.

You combine clever use of color with industrial design and huge doses of expressionism and magic realism. Correct me if I am wrong and add any other genre influences that you believe formed what you are today.

I use many different ideas in my artwork to make it come alive for me. It's out of my love for many different types of art. I can see something in a painting I absolutely love and will obsess over it for weeks. As I paint I want to recreate it in some way. If that means hinting at the image with a rough shape of it or copying it in my own way.

My use of color has always been a mystery to me, for I never follow any guide lines or color wheel. Besides my moments of trying to paint a renaissance style work or landscape I never let color selection take the wheel in my painting. Even though people have told me they love my use of color, or hate it, I try new color patterns all the time with no restraint from outside influence. I can't, for it will only distract my creative process. My choice of color can be chaotic to me, and why not? Isn't the world chaotic? Art is a reflection of society and society is chaos in motion to me. If colors don't work I later correct them. It is an
emotional ride with music playing a big key in my painting. One of my favorite things to listen to while I paint is Beethoven's 9th symphony. It is such a beautiful work of art itself, filled with so many different layers of dramatic climaxes. I can completely zone out and get into the music with my brushes almost dancing to the music on the canvas. The 9th symphony also connects with me in the way that Michelangelo's work does. The determination and superb talent gel together creating a force that is nothing short of historic. I see these great painters and musicians as a guide to gather personal strength though my own turmoil in painting. I have many reasons for my use of industrial design, such as my love of geometric shapes and patterns in nature, blueprints, the layout of cities and maps. I love detail and all it can relate to visually. For example, the intricate mechanics of clocks is always in my mind with the way every component connects to the other in order for the whole system to work as one machine.

I love to pull the viewer deep inside the painting all the way to the single brush strokes. Like the clock, the single brush stroke connects to the others to compile a complete work of art. I love to visualize the balance of these brush strokes, always playing on the edge of overdoing it. The safe areas to play in balance have been done and are boring to me most of the time. All these ideas play in the making of mechanical marks and detailed structures within structures while trying to encapsulate a broader image or idea on canvas. Expressionism is always key to my creative process. Without it I am just a machine making lifeless images. It is who I am as a creative person, always trying to reflect my feelings outward onto the canvas. An artist is always expressing some feeling of themselves into whatever they are creating. It is an exchange of energy from one object to the other. I have not become one thing or type of artist. There will never be a finish line in my pursuit in expression and exploring the arts.

Do your recurrent Italian Renaissance and abstract expressionist elements define your personal idiom?

No it does not, I am my own person with my own style. I do love the renaissance works and their themes are often present in my work but I don't feel it defines me as an artist. I paint large amounts of abstract work but that also doesn't define me. I haven't painted pure abstract work in quite some time now. I am always expanding my range of expression and styles. Now I have moved onto black and white works with a splatter effect such as Jackson Pollock, not to copy his work, but to learn from it with using his art at a basic blueprint from which I can expand on into my own style and form of expression. Jumping all the time from one subject matter to the next has always been my thing.

How do you define the phrase “eclectic artist”, concerning your personal idiom?

I am always using new methods and techniques in my artwork. I never stick to one medium and style for long. I find this keeps my work fresh and exciting, to myself and others. I love the feeling when I sit down to paint something and even I end up being surprised by the end result. Practicing in so many different styles and themes means that even I never know where one of my works will take me.

“Which is the more difficult: light and shade or good design? “ Can you answer that question?

They can both be very hard, but in my opinion light and shade is more difficult than good design to me because, the layout and design of a painting is the easiest to me because it's the most fun. I love figuring out how the shapes will fit together and play on one another. Telling the story with my own creative theories. Light and shade in my opinion are
more closely related to a realistic type of work, something that doesn't necessarily define my work, unlike design. Light and shade is something I play around with all the time. For example, sometimes I will paint a whole painting completely out of the shadow and light then followed by huge bold lines dividing the shapes. To me it doesn't have to be perfect and you can do whatever you like. Some people take it so seriously, but how else do you create something new and fresh without breaking the rules. Number one rule is that you have to keep it fun and alive.

Can you comment on this phrase expressed by the Leonardo Da Vinci? "Knowing therefore that you cannot be a good master unless you have a universal power of representing by your art all the varieties of the forms which nature produces, which indeed you will not know how to do unless you see them and retain them in your mind”.

A great artist can hold an image in his mind and execute the work from memory, and in Leonardo's opinion, one can only achieve perfection by studying the elements for themselves in person. This is relative to the times of the renaissance when realism was the focal point of the artist. Leonardo thought in order to capture the light and shadow of objects you had to understand how light worked itself to the extreme measures of even dissecting the human eye in order to see how light is taken into it. His dissection of human bodies to understand how the organs and bones lay under the skin are a great example of his level of devotion to understanding how the human body works in his search for perfection.

This method was applied to studying water, landscapes, trees, and animals in great detail to get as close to nature as he possibly could. Knowledge is power and he understood that tremendously. The nature of art is different today, though. A good work of art can be achieved based solely on an image in the artist's mind. An image can be just as striking whether it's seen or simply imagined. The works of artists like Dali, Rothko, or Pollack can be equally as moving as realistic works by da Vinci or Michelangelo.
Are your works optimistic or pessimistic? I conceive them as optimistic but still art is broadcast and perceived differently.

I don’t paint them to be optimistic or pessimistic; that really isn’t my goal in my work. I just make these images and whatever reaction I get out of people is fine by me. Love it or hate it, or you don’t even know how to feel about it. All I want out of the viewer is to feel something. Some works I may be feeling down and that can come out in the work or on the flip side, upbeat about something. But it is never my intention to enforce a certain type of emotion, unless a certain piece is trying to capture that emotion, which I do sometimes. That would affect my creative process. If I were to think like that it would narrow the creative process in the work because I would always have the emotion in the back of my mind flooding into the execution of the work. A spontaneous creative flow is the key to how I am able to move over the canvas. Mistakes will happen and I look forward to them a lot. They give birth to great ideas.

What inspires you most, as an observing artist, Nature or City life?

Growing up in NYC I would have to say city life. I am also inspired by nature greatly but the smells and look of cities always stimulated the artist in me. The cities are full of so much drama and raw emotion right there in your face, you can’t avoid it. That’s what I love about it, it’s like my discussion on the little parts inside a clock that make the whole system work. That’s what I see in a city on the streets. I would often go to Manhattan with no destination in mind and once I got there, I would walk around at random just taking in all the little things in motion that work together to make the city function. I was always attracted to the diversity a big city contains. In Manhattan you can be walking among garbage filled streets and turn a corner onto the cobblestone streets of the upper class. I always enjoyed bar hopping and starting up conversations with people there. The stories they tell, and places and things they have seen, is better than any movie. Real life events in these people and places is as close as I can get to the raw paint first being squeezed onto the pallet, the birth of an idea.

I just relate more to the city having grown up there, seeing the monuments and overwhelming buildings as a child. Growing up I was always mesmerized by the dimensions of the World Trade Center in contrast to the layout of the Manhattan skyline. I would draw these buildings and bridges over and over again. Now I see the same thing in nature down to the smallest animals and microorganisms working together to make that whole system work as a whole. I am not a landscape painter, and never plan to be, but I do enjoy from time to time trying to capture the beauty in nature.

How important is esoteric symbolism and / or the occult and intuition in your work?

Symbolism, whether it is of the Mayan, Aztec, Egyptian, or Celtic, is constantly present in my work. I find the works of the ancients some of the most powerful work ever made. Those symbols are rooted in me from seeing them in my youth. To answer your question on esoteric symbolism, it does not matter to me if the majority understand the subject matter I choose. In fact, maybe they will learn something new and investigate more thoroughly after seeing an image that interests them.
I am always in search of powerful imagery and what better material than symbolism? It is everything and everywhere, imbedded in our culture as a whole. I feel simplicity is the fuel in my work. Details are balanced around the idea and image of a simple pattern in my artwork. I don’t know how important it is seeing how I’m always changing in my ideas. It may be a thing of the past in a year or two for all I know, but for now it seems to be one of the recurring elements in my work.

What prevails in you Sentiment or Reason?

I tend to fall on the side of sentiment. While I may implement reason in the planning of my work, a feeling can move me and change the whole path of the painting. Ultimately, I paint the way I feel, not based on logic or convention.

Do you enjoy exhibitions? Tell us about yours.

To be honest I don’t normally like large groups of people, they tend to make me nervous and uncomfortable. I have had a few interviews at shows where this has happened. I have shown at a few places in NYC before I moved to Florida. The shows were great, and I learned a lot from them. Meeting new people and the whole atmosphere of an art show is very interesting. I really don’t like the idea of the artist standing in front of his work ready to explain every piece of work. You don’t buy a new cd, or record and after every song you listen to you pull up the meaning by the artist. No, you take it all in and let your imagination run wild and paint your own picture in your mind of what it means to yourself. When I start explaining a painting sometimes at these shows, they ask what it means and I explain, then they follow by saying “Oh I saw this in it”, and half the time I love what they came up with. It sometimes invokes so many more ideas for me on things I would have never thought of. I want the viewer to walk into a show of mine and take in their own ideas and theories on the work, because half the time there is no deep meaning behind my work. That is what I love about my art. I paint random images sometimes with no meaning behind them. I paint what I see and experience as a person. If the viewer feels anything from my work I’m happy. Some people don’t see or feel it and that’s ok, it’s just not for them.

Apart from painting what other arts, or artists do you admire?

Apart from the many painters and visual artists I admire, I get inspiration from musicians. Music has always been a large part of my life as I am a musician as well. I play guitar, write music, and play the drums mostly. Genres of music which I love are early 50’s rock and roll from Jerry Lee Louis, Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, and Buddy Holly. The 60’s had some of my favorite artists including The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, Queen, The Rolling Stones, Black Sabbath, Emerson Lake and Palmer, King Crimson, Led Zeppelin, and The Who. Certain artists in those bands I connect on a deeper level with such as John Lennon and Jimi Hendrix.

I paint a lot of portraits of John Lennon because I think he was one of the most interesting and beautiful minds that has ever lived. People like him only come around every 100 years or so I think. I love reading on his life and listing to his music as he was one of the best rock vocalist to ever live. I think I’m mostly attracted to his individuality, spontaneous nature, and witty attitude in the face of a
close minded culture surrounding him. Jimi Hendrix is someone always playing on my Ipod. I'm always searching for rare live versions of his music. I just get lost in his 15 to 20 minute guitar solos, or as he would call it, electric church music. The thing I love about him is he always wanted to capture the raw creation of his art for the audience to witness by just winging it.

Even being such a huge star that he was he would just jam on stage without fear of mistakes and flaws, because he understood that imperfections are the true gems of music. They make the music more human and alive, at least to me it does. Music is so polished today, in a bad way, in my opinion. It lacks the creative spark these guys had. I'm open to new things all the time, but modern music has let me down too many times. They remove all the white noise and little things like microphones picking up too much guitar and vocals in certain spots of a song.

Those sounds help build atmosphere to a song which gives it a unique individualism. Some albums are just more than music to me, they are complete works of art from the album art to the order of the songs. Pink Floyd's The Wall, Dark Side of The Moon, Animals, or the Beatles albums such as The White Album, Help, Sgt. Pepper, Abbey Road, and Rubber Soul. The Beatles along with Jimi Hendrix were always changing which is a true sign of an artist to me. People get mad and don't understand why artists change their sound or artwork over time, but don't understand it's impossible for the artist to remain stagnant. We are always changing and creating new ideas, otherwise they become a machine just producing the same stuff over and over again. A lot of artists fall into this by greed and fear of losing what they already have achieved with fans of their work. Other than visual artists and musicians I gather inspiration in my art from the great and unique minds of humanity such as Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin. They may not be artists but their way of thinking and their impact on history is a motivational factor I always return to time and time again.

Favorite authors? Do you combine insights of reading with painting synesthetic-ally?

Unfortunately I am not a big reader, but I have read a few short stories and novels by Stephen King. I have made artwork based on literature for my wife, such as George Orwell's Animal Farm and portraits of Kurt Vonnegut. If I get any inspiration from reading I guess it would be my interest in documentaries and interviews of the bands and artists I like. I often listen to documentaries on my headphones while I paint.

You are a family person, I can tell, does family reinforces an artist or do you agree with artists that prefer to devote themselves to their art only?

I am a family man, and I involve my family and friends in my work as much as I can.
I can't be one of those closed off types who work alone. I know because I did that for many years. Working at my art with little to no friends. It may work for some but not for me. I love involving my family and friends in ideas and thoughts on my work. My wife loves the developing stages of my artwork and is my most honest critic, which I love. My family is my strength and I can't thank them enough for the love they give me all the time. The journey has been in motion for some time now and I love it all.

Do you isolate yourself when you paint?

It really does not matter to me, most of the time I do but I don't have to. I spend a lot of time painting in the living room in front of the kids while they play. I don't like the feeling of isolating myself from my family, but sometimes when I'm in the middle of creating something with great detail and planning it can be easier to do if I'm alone.

Are you working on any project currently?

I am in the middle of making a series of black and white paintings depicting classic horror figures for a Halloween show in Orlando for the City Arts Factory. It's a lot of fun recreating the horror figures with Pollock-like drippy paint and splatter effects all over the canvas. I am also still in the process of completing the Dream Series I started almost a year ago which I will show at the Webber Gallery in Ocala in January of next year. I started drawings for a series of paintings I want to make built around the theme of the Roman Gods. This started from my recent drawing called The Death of the Nephilim King. A compilation of different ancient Gods from different faiths around the world and different times in history. I have some art shows coming up in Jacksonville and Orlando which are at music festivals. So I am in the middle of making paintings and drawings of musicians and bands. Plus, on top of all this, I'm always making prints of my work.

Future plans?

I have just recently launched my new website at www.michaelkulickartworks.com where people can buy original works straight from the site and has links to where people can buy prints of my artwork as well. I really look forward to creating more series based works. I have already started working on a larger scale and plan to continue with larger works. I just feel like there's more room to breathe on the larger canvases. I have some shows lined up which are keeping me busy painting. I plan on just doing what I've always done, which is to make art and hope to turn people on to it. It's been a great journey so far and can't wait for the next series of experiences that inspire my future works.

HOME PAGE
http://michaelkulickartworks.com
George Schinas was born in Athens, Greece, in 1977. From a very early age he showed interest in design and fine arts. He has studied graphic design, but his major inclination has always been towards heraldry, calligraphy and the fine manuscript decoration of the European Middle Ages and of the Renaissance.

His parallel interest towards history, with an emphasis on European civilisation, has led him into a “hand-on” research on the vast cultural background of Renaissance Martial Arts, leading him to be one of the co-founders of the Hellas Study Group of ARMA, a leading international organisation recognised by the WOMAU.

As a heraldic artist, calligrapher and illuminator, he has worked for various Military and Ecclesiastical Orders, corporations and private individuals. He has been awarded for his heraldic work by the Hellenic Grand Priory of the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem. He is also, the designer and painter of the badge of the Grand Lodge of Greece. His work is, mostly, produced on “Winsor and Newton” drawing paper with Gouache colours of the same brand.

George Shinas has lectured on public schools and various cultural centres in Athens, on subjects concerning European history and culture. He is a member of the Hellenic Heraldic and Genealogical Society and also of the White Lion Society, England.
The arms of the Brotherhood of Saint Mark or “Marxbrüder” (original name “brotherhood of Our dear lady and pure Virgin Mary and the Holy and warlike heavenly prince Saint Mark”). Commissioned work of the insignia of the historical 15th century fencing guild, where a professional warrior could be taught the full curriculum of weaponry and the art of war in general. This has been the greater school of fencers within the Holy Roman Empire for centuries, and since the recognition of Frederick III the Peaceful, the guild has been the exclusive authority to name masters of the art of the sword (Meister des langen Schwerts). It is said that one of the founding members of the Guild had been the famous 15th cent. Master of arms, Hans Talhoffer. Talhoffer is very well known today through his great work of at least five different fight books, which, apart from the art of war, are involved in scientific or philosophical topics, such as groundbreaking inventions, mathematics, astrology etc. This evidence makes us believe that Talhoffer had been a true renaissance “Homo Universalis”.

This is commissioned work of a new heraldic sign used by a modern school following the German fencing tradition. The Talhoffer legacy can be traced heraldically through the specific insignia that he used in his own coat of arms, that is, two swords in saltire through a crown. In this case the swords are not displayed as going through, but under the crown. This symbol, in numerous variations, can be traced within the works of many masters at arms but also as the mark of many sword makers of the period. The crown charge as used in those cases must not be mistaken for a sign of peerage (as this would be not it’s proper heraldic display) but, it seems that it represents a deeper philosophical meaning, concerning renaissance ideas such as the supremacy of spirit over matter- the use and creation of swords as the manifestation of the human intellect through the ability to extract natural material and transform it into something unique through man’s own creative imagination. In this way, the crown would represent the intellect or spirit, while the swords the mundane manifestation of human inspiration. However this interpretation remains a personal view, alas, it can not be proved through historical fact.
This is another example of a variation of the same theme. This work had been created to be used at the cover of a book publication (Χρυσοβαλάντης Ταμπακάκης- Γιώργος Ζαχαρόπουλος: «Η Ιπποτική Τέχνη του Ξίφους», εκδόσεις Μπατσιούλας, 2011. It is a rephrase of the ARMA fencing school symbol, together with the painting of a knight. The subject had been more or less predefined. The armour is a gothic 15th. Century combat armour not fit for jousting. However, I used a jousting “lance of war” for aesthetic reasons as well as to cover different aspects of European fighting. The shield could be either taken as a buckler or a Viking shield (charges are not in scale). The sword depictions are taken from historical museum originals. The sword in the middle is modelled out of the 14th cent French longsword of Sceau de Jean, eveque du Puy. The one on the left is an English flambard rapier 1685-1702 and the other is a German “cut and thrust”, 16th cent. Again, the crown does not represent peerage, but a symbolic connection with the ancient fencing tradition.

A coat of arms might be composed of various parts, each one of them with its distinct symbolism and rules of display. This is also commissioned work of the full heraldic achievement of the Austria - Hungary Empire. It is composed of three shields of arms, each containing a variety of marshallings (the use of more that one coat of arms in one shield), making this a really complicated piece of heraldic work. It has three crowns, two supporters and the insignia of four chivalric orders are also displayed. For the compartment (the base on which everything stands) I have used the original design of the late heraldic-art master, H. G. Strohl, as I thought that this would be the best way to preserve the “feel” and the distinction of this very famous and glorified achievement. I admit I had to make some elaborate historic research to be able to portray this in the heraldically correct manner.

Sometimes a more primitive (but at the same time unique in it’s beauty) decoration art is to be explored. This is a monogram “G” designed as a “first- letter”, along with the runic interpretation of the commissioner’s name. The original intention was to portray an old Viking style using decorative knotwork. Sometimes charges demand a considerable amount of detail in a small scale.
A large part of the work of a heraldic artist is the ability to create book illuminations and also to be familiar with the technique of calligraphy. The heraldic art masters of the past were able to write in a variety of different styles. On this work I have used one of my own making which is based on the classic early renaissance gothic style. Although this might not be “correct” in a strict historical sense, I decided to follow my instinct as I thought that the result would be of artistic interest. I hope that you will agree with me as I consider this to be a good piece indeed. The text is taken out of Sir Thomas Malory’s masterpiece “Le Morte d’ Arthur”, 15th century.
At the beginning I was very reluctant with the idea to combine different styles of different eras within the frame of a single work. Now I am glad that I dared to do so. On this one the text is an English translation of the “Gates of Hell” fragment of the original masterpiece of Dante’s Inferno. My original intention was to capture the feeling of the text, by means of combining a solemn medieval style in writing and illumination, together with a new “dead branches” romantic decoration that would remind of the famous Dore’s carving work on the same subject, along with an Art- nouveau-ish ending on the right bottom.
No wonder why Evangeline Zorba captivated the attention of Paradox Ethereal Magazine. A true artist exhibiting vivid imagination and great skill. As she revealed, from a young age she indulged in reading illustrated books full of gravures, comics and Japanese manga, now she is proudly presenting her own, sharing with us three illustrations inspired from Faust, flavored with her unique artistic and esoteric idiom, and a comic called Passengers of a Dream, combining it with a story of magic realism. Enjoy!
graphic designer

FAUST
Illustrations inspired from “Faust”

PASSENGERS OF A DREAM
A voyage in dream, a voyage in the subconscious and the return to innocence

Where am I? How I came here? I remember everything differently... My vision is blurred...
What am I doing now? What am I asking?
What is my desire and where am I going?

I am falling, I am lost...
I go deeper and deeper...
I seek for a hand to hold me...
A light to lead me out...

I am dreaming this moment
Life here is bad, strange, and cruel
My little world is magical
Full of hope and colors
And dolls dancing at night when I sleep

Give me a message, a star...
A compass, a map...
You!! How beautiful you are!
Come near and tell me

Is it you, I mean me?
Is this voyage worthy?
Stay here for a little while...
Tell me...
Tell me... Sweetheart you are so beautiful
We are one, you and me

I am the past, you are the future

A chain, two interdependent rings

Stops of the same voyage...

Passengers of the same dream...