

BELLA

MAGAZINE

Arts & Culture, NYC Artist Spotlight

Artist Paul Loughney And The Afterlife Of A Magazine

by Jessica Licciardello



As the Creative Director and designer of the BELLA print magazine, I see the end-product of my work as a bound book, designed with the heart and soul of myself and all of its contributors, to be seen by our readers and convey a message—but what if we went beyond that—to a place where the magazine takes on a new life in the abstract, and the imagery and printed pages serve as the artist’s palette, and the message can be reimagined. That is what NYC artist Paul Loughney does and reincarnates on the walls of art galleries in NYC and beyond. His current exhibit “Confetti of the Mind” is on display at the Lesley Heller galley on the lower east side of Manhattan and pushes the meaning of the magazine, and his own work, to new levels.

I had a chance to visit the gallery and walk the show with Paul, and while absorbing the show myself, was able to get a glimpse into the mind and methodology of the artist. The gallery features several artists work, and as Paul described to me, the process of participating in an exhibition like this allows his work to have “conversations” with other

pieces, and the brilliant curation by Lesley Heller and Peter Gynd showcases artists whose work invoke thoughtful and imaginative conversation with each other and the viewer. Paul works in collage, meticulously cutting geometric and organic shapes from the pages of magazines to compose his thoughtful compositions. Since he is working with layers that include human figures, we can feel the tactile contours of bodies and skin. While most slivers are abstract, we sometimes get glimpses of a complete human, like the chin and lips of a woman, which is both beautiful and somewhat grounding, comforting in the abyss. I found the balance of composition and color to be successful and allowed my mind to come up with interpretations that could be both internal associative meanings or expressed outside of myself into the realm of being human and the connectedness we all have. It is an interesting way to think of the experience of viewing art as well as a magazine. It is something we view with our own perspectives and associations, but when distributed on a large scale, or shown on gallery walls, we are sharing the same experience with countless other people.

This particular installation includes a large scale mural-like collage that Paul created specifically for this space, but can be modified and expanded upon in the future. It served as a portal, where the work seemed to be birthed out of this corner, at the same time simultaneously existing as a piece in itself. I loved that one framed piece seemed to be teetering on the edge of the large panel, as if with enough time it will make it's way onto the white wall like an expanding universe. Paul explained this new piece as pushing the boundaries of his own work and allowing him to expand into new chapters of his creative path. After all, I believe this is one the most meaningful moments that can happen in the journey of an artist—the breakthroughs that allow an artist to create even more ways to expand the consciousness of the viewer.

I highly recommend the show and this gallery. There is a warmth and grace within the walls of the Lesley Heller space, felt within the art and in the interaction with Gallery Director Peter Gynd and Owner Lesley Heller. Paul's solo exhibit "Confetti of the Mind" is on display until October 20, 2019, along with a solo exhibit by Daniel Wiener in the adjoining gallery space. While you are in the Lower East Side, be sure to walk the streets and check out the other galleries for some amazing inspiration, including McKenzie Fine Art, and Pablo's Birthday galleries.

LesleyHeller.com

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