



Anna Cipollone

Anna Cipollone is a writer and editor based in Toronto. Her work has appeared in magazines like *Chatelaine*, *Canada's 100 Best*, *Festival Style*, *Yoga Journal* and *FASHION*, with topics focused on style, design, yoga, arts and culture. She splits her time between Roncesvalles and the Kewarths.

In Conversation with Winnie Truong

Winnie Truong's large-scale drawings are highly conceptual, imbued with both sensual and strange elements, and charged with emotion. Channelling a surreal world, Truong's work is playful yet powerful – meticulous, layered and laboured over until she deems the energy just so. What began as a series of entangled, furry, distinctly female figures has evolved into paper-cut sculptures suspended in ripe, botanical gardens, and now in movement through stop-motion film loops. The Toronto-based artist's most recent show, *Supernatural*, at Ottawa's artist-run contemporary art gallery, *SAW*, featured a survey of different bodies of work – from line drawing to animation and installation – all of them showcasing Truong's ability to push the possibilities of scale.



Winnie Truong work is playful yet powerful – meticulous, layered and laboured cut-outs create her signature pieces.



Many Hands Keep it Together and Pull it Apart, chalk pastel and coloured pencil.

What spoke to you about this medium?

Drawing isn't really a stream that's explicitly focused on in any sort of art education, so I'm fascinated with the medium and its potential to come from a place that is outside of that western art canon – I can create these things that are unburdened by that history, in a way.

How has becoming a mother changed your creative process?

Some of the work has transitioned into cut paper figures; it's about these women who are birthing their own environments, and bursting with botanical elements. So I think in a way it's been a metaphor for my experience.

What led you toward sculptural work?

I want to create more immersive spaces; my work is about pushing the boundaries of paper and drawing as a medium and seeing its possibilities beyond the static image. What was intended as more standing sculptures actually became these collages that really play with light and shadow. This work could exist in so many different formations as I'm laying down the paper cut pieces and weaving them in and out of different compositions, and that's why the work has also transitioned into animation as of recently. A lot of these movements were just asking to be captured in these short little looping animations. >

What is it about hair that attracted you to that subject matter?

We all deal with it in some capacity, which is a great basis to have all these conversations about gender construction and society's code of use about femininity. The hair is less accoutrement; it's this beautiful, refined thing when coifed but it also has this abject quality. Especially when it comes out in the "wrong places" on the female form. A lot of the work is about reversing the gaze with these women – creatures – in various poses but turned away from the viewer. We're re-confronting the body through this more empowered stance.

What is the process like for you?

It became the crux of my practice to create something that is monumental and also fragile on this really thin, paper substrate, especially with the tools of coloured pencil speaking to nostalgia. The process starts with a chalk pastel base that's like an under painting and then it's just built up line work and this obsessive mark making. It's a lot of compounded lines with different colour vibrations. Every strand that I'm creating on the page is a direct movement of the pencil. And just like you would coif or "do" hair, there's a lot of juggling and minor preening involved as well.



Belle Nacre, chalk pastel and coloured pencil 50" x 46"



Pintucked 2018, coloured pencils, chalk pastel and cut paper collage 59.5" x 50" Photo by: Tyler Webb



Supernatural, installation view of exhibit at SAW Gallery (flower cut outs on walls.) Photo by: Justin Wannacott



Moth and Mother 2018, coloured pencils and cut paper collage 19.5" x 19.5"



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How do you cope with creative blocks?

For me, it's been about switching up the routine. I think that's why artist residencies have been so fruitful for me. When that energy runs out of a particular idea, working in different studios, environments, or amongst other artists, has been a very moving experience. Those are the experiences that really come back into the studio the most and re-invigorate my thoughts and ideas. My residency at the Doris McCarthy Fool's Paradise in 2016 was a real catalyst for the new work.

What is the intention behind your work?

There are these narratives culled from female experience within my work, taken through the surreal or abstract view. But there is the impetus to create works that generate conversations about our own heavily coded ideas of women in the world. (15)