



Young Blood

OPERA GALLERY
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And the day came when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." With this illuminating and formidable sentence, Anaïs Nin perfectly summarizes today's dilemma for the young who are torn between the material and imaginative comforts of childhood and the vagaries of life as an adult, who, with fresh, young blood pulse to the frenetic rhythm of the Western World's metropolises. The fifteen artists chosen for this exhibition draw their inspiration from today's world with that same desire, but express their commitment within this context in a unique way.

The more precocious of these artists often benefited from a nurturing environment that spurred the development of their talent. The result is a keen eye mixed with a very carefree attitude towards worldly matters. Take **Charlotte Filbert**, for example. She's been painting since the age of five, drawing her inspiration from ocean and mountain

landscape scenes. Her compositions are strongly inspired by traditional Mexican iconography, as seen in her way of oversimplifying things and her palette of pure colors (*Meditate*). She defines her subjects as if she were cutting a mosaic, crowned with the glorious lessons of the master Impressionists (*Girl and Sculpture*). In **Camilla D'Errico's** drawings, one can almost feel the freshness. Inspired by both Japanese mangas and Parisian street urchins, Camilla combines humour with dabs of eroticism to depict her angelic models. In her sweet-and-sour reveries, Camilla's little babes are always accompanied by two important elements: animals and disguises (*The Bonded Tree*). **Steve Shanks** devotes his life's work to childhood with a larger dose of melancholy. With over-developed heads, doll-like bodies, and hypnotic stares, his characters probe the spectator's intimate stratum. With poetic naiveté, Shanks holds up a mirror to our adult consciousness in the hopes of glimpsing a

reflection of our childhood psyche, helping us bond with his ideals (*Eyes like Teard*). Partners both in their private and professional lives, **Brandt Peters** and **Kathie Olivas** serve up their imagination in a more comic-book style. **Brandt Peters** uses cartoons from Walt Disney and the world of Tim Burton. In a morbid yet humorous vein, he spoofs our childhood icons, incarnating the outcasts of a society going to the pits by painting scatterbrained animals or abandoned objects (*The Arrival*). As for **Kathie Olivas**, she has given us the world of *Misery Children*, little people who look desolate and mean (*Restrained*). Created in various art-forms such as paintings, engravings, and sculptures in resin, these hybrid beings look busy in a scene populated with giant lollipops and big-toothed rabbits. Childhood is no longer synonymous with pureness and beauty, it also includes a touch of strangeness at its very core. In conjunction with this childhood theme,

other artists attempt to sublimate woman as beauty's ideal. This is especially true with certain female artists who draw their inspiration from both European and Asian origins. **Jenn Porreca** is greatly influenced by Japanese mangas and engravings from the Edo period (1605-1868). Her compositions are inspired by Hokusai's idealized vision of nature, with a narrative touch of Hiroshige. Steeped in scenes of undergrowth bathed in twilight, pretty geishas come to life; the perfect alter-egos to the artist's sculpies. Decked out in traditional Japanese splendor, these elegant ladies advance stylishly into the present. By using such a sensitive, obvious parallel between the young lady and the flower (*The Capture*), Jenn renews, with Asian symbols of happiness and vanity, the feeling notion of life: it both enchants us and leaves us pensive. The works of **Melissa Forman** find roots in European art of the 19th century, with a touch of pre-Raphaelite references and dabs of photography. Melissa

