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PAINTED GREEN

Ellie Perla Helps Celebrate a New Gallery with Forward-Thinking Philosophy

BY ROBERT NEVEL

Artist Ellie Perla does not need a traditional canvas to paint on. Her environment provides her with ample material to decorate, and she tries to care for the environment around her. The culture and the physical surroundings that make up the world all have an undeniable impact on her work.

"I love to paint on almost anything I can, from old records to clothes and accessories, which is recycling," Perla said.

Recycling is a theme echoed by the art shop featuring her work, the Atelier 1022 Gallery. The gallery, according to its website, aims to create purposeful artwork that not only nurtures local artisans and supports the green cause, but enriches the world people live in. Along with Ellie Perla's paintings, other artists work is on sale including literature, music, and clothing.

The colorful artwork offered by the gallery includes striking concepts such as "fun certificates," and a throwback to 3-D stereo cards. For Perla and the Atelier gallery, such meaningful gifts of expression make life better for everyone.

"I think decorative art is environmental as a whole, because it improves our life conditions, our immediate environment," said Perla.

Perla was born in Romania, and grew up among a mix of European and other cultures. Her detailed, mystical work brings to mind so many different aesthetics and cultural influences that the viewer's mind can be drawn in several directions at once. Styles and forms meld to create Perla's own artistic voice. For example, in a collection of interpreted LP covers the seriousness of spirituality merges easily with rock 'n' roll. The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" cover conveys a whole new feeling to the album art.



"PENDULUM"

I HOPE THE FUTURE OF ART WILL EMBRACE THE PAST, AND ALLOW ART LOVERS TO SEE MUCH MORE THAN JUST AN IMAGE OF TODAY, BUT IMAGES THAT REFLECT WHO WE ARE ACROSS TIME.

"When we make gifts we search for things that the gifted likes," explained Perla. "I would like to do the same with my art, so I constantly search for value and meaning. People deserve it."

The Atelier 1022 Gallery opens Saturday,

May 14 at 7 p.m., the night of Wynwood's Second Saturday Art Gallery Walk.

ROBERT NEVEL: There seems to be a lot of cultural references in your art. Which cultures/art inspires your work the most?

ELLIE PERLA: I was born of German and Romanian origins in the region of Banat in Romania, near the city of Timisoara. This region is a melting pot of several nationalities stubbornly surviving the hardships of history more or less in harmony: Romanians, Germans, Hungarians and Serbs. Our fusion culture also includes traces of Turkish, French and Russian influences, and a large dose of Latin behavior. Aside from Romania, I draw inspiration from countries such as Peru, Egypt, China, and India — countries rooted far back in history which possess very elaborate folk art.

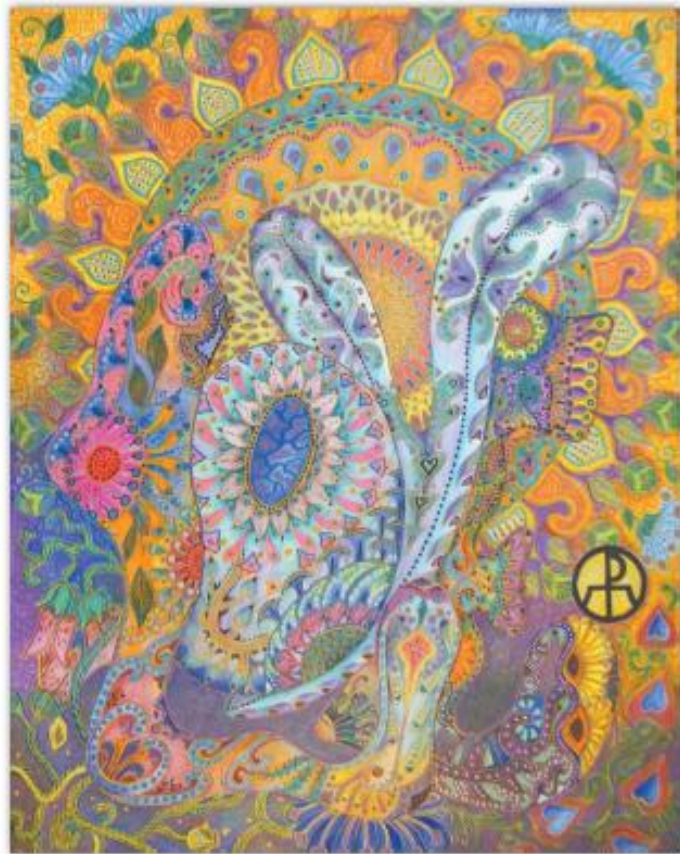
RN: What are some of the Earth-friendly methods you use to create art?

EP: Reusing and reinterpreting objects from the past not only helps the environment but is also a recycling of cultural ideas. Our history is so full of moments of glory, be it a Victorian photograph or a Stones album cover. Bringing these back into our homes as current artwork invites cultural communication and debate.

RN: You interpreted a collection of album covers, how does music affect your art and your creative process?

EP: My entire life I was surrounded by music, music of any kind. Music, dance, and languages are the most primal means of communication. I would like to believe that my art does communicate some of the tones, rhythms, and sensibility of the music around me.

I am in awe of the impact music has on humans and I desire — from the heart — that graphic art finds ways of having a similar impact on our lives in the next decades. So music is more than anything my inspiration, my hope, my idol.



FROM LEFT: "GARDEN OF EDEN" AND "LOVE"

RN: On the Atelier site, there's an idea of gift-giving. What 'tokens of appreciation' do you enjoy illustrating the most?

EP: Most women love receiving flowers the most, and so do I — I love to receive them and paint them, along with the rest of our ecological world. I draw a lot of people's faces, fruits, and radiant suns also. What I love drawing the most, though, are feelings and virtues, and the symbols we associate with these.

RN: Why is the gift-giving aspect of art important to you?

EP: I am a hopeless optimist, one of those people who has not lost her belief in humanity, one who sees the glass always half full and not half empty, and believes that we can learn anything. I have complete trust in young generations. Giving is what makes us good people, no matter what,

and how much, we give. Art is a gift we borrow from the world so it is just fair to give it back.

RN: What are your plans for the future, and the future of the Atelier gallery?

EP: With Atelier 1022 Gallery we would like to recreate the sense of an artistic community in a public space. A space where art lovers join in and celebrate beauty, colors, and rhythms in a place where art is made and polyglot gossip resounds off the walls. It is meant to be a place that reflects the melting pot culture of our city.

Art exhibits for 2011-2012 will include such themes as hard rock art and music, with live bands; a steam punk art and fashion show; documentary photography and short films; fairytale books and young art; graffiti and tattoo art; the history of photography, and others.

RN: What inspired the artistic use of functional products such as 3-D stereo cards or the Fun Certificates, and how do you think that will influence the future of art?

EP: The items you mentioned each have two interesting sides — one, they were 'invented' long ago and were widely used; and two, they address an interesting aspect of today's cultural and social life. For example, the certificates are turn-of-the-century printed items that can now be applied to daily issues in our mundane existence such as: rewarding children for reading books, or exchanging marriage vows without legal implications, or making New Year's resolutions.

3-D Stereocards are a novelty today, along with great 'Avatar'-like movies. 3-D is all the rage. It is astounding how many people have never had a chance to view a stereocard,

which is a 3-D photograph. About a century back, they were to people what television is to us today. We are thus trying to recycle these ideas, bring them back, and share them with everyone. At the present time, our collection of new 3-D Stereocards probably reaches 20,000 new digital 3-D photographs, along with about 1,000 vintage ones. I hope the future of art will embrace the past, and allow art lovers to see much more than just an image of today, but images that reflect who we are across time.

The Atelier 1022 Gallery, 2732 N.W. Second Ave., in Miami opens Saturday, May 14 at 7 p.m., the night of Wynwood's Second Saturday Gallery Walk. Call 305-535-0951 or visit atelier1022.com for more information.

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