



Helen Gory

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HELEN GORY HAS been working with artists, presenting and selling their work, as an art dealer and gallery director for more than twenty years. With a keen eye for astute aesthetics and a deep passion for visual expression, Gory could not resist the instinctual desire to make art of her own.

Working away in her private, makeshift home studio, Gory kept her art to herself for a number of years. After honing her skills, trying as objectively as possible to critique her work as she would those in her stable, Gory recently took the bold step to present her debut solo exhibition in Melbourne.

The body of work – collages and assemblages of found media from old magazines, books, posters and the like – is a expression of her political views, emotional engagement with the images in front of her, and a newfound voice for expressing her creative self. ARTIST PROFILE heard from Gory about her creative processes and inspirations.

I sit at my long, blond wood table and look endlessly through magazines and books. Anything vintage, manuals, comics, photography, fashion, military and sex mags, landscapes, film noir imagery, buildings – the list is as endless as my collection.

Scouring second hand shops, thrift stores and newsstands is an integral part of my process.

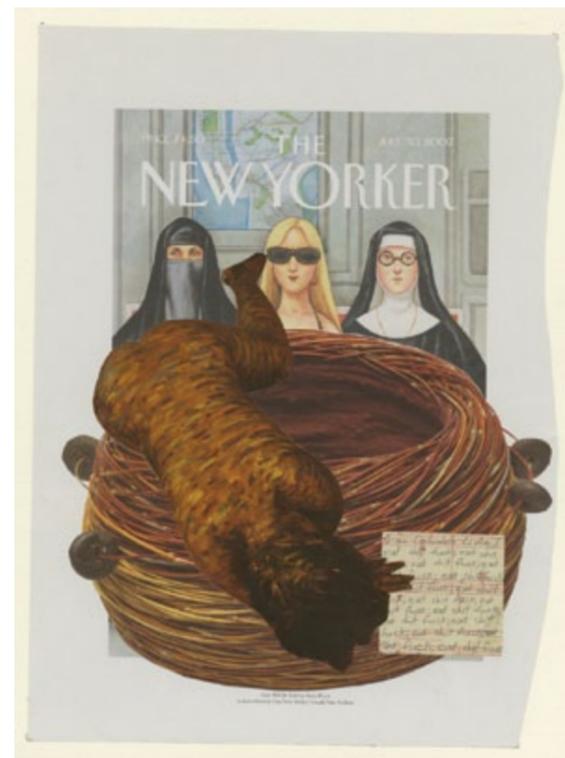
As long as it catches my attention for some inexplicable reason, I will endeavour to use it in my collage.

Look, tear, cut, trace and paste, glue and throw out or save for later. It is a flurry of slow work and hurried work – slow when I'm looking and slow when I'm cutting, but when images keep re-appearing in my hand after I've put them aside a flurry of new movement happens.

I start by assembling sad expressions, silly poses, and dirty brick walls. Bubbles, exposed breasts and waving hands. Looks of seduction and fear, fences and graffiti. As long as the works speak to me, I keep creating and compiling.

Some of the works come together quickly and others I have to put away until the right piece or image comes along to make it complete. My favourite images I leave to the side and allow to talk to me. Some haunt me. I put those on a shelf and wander past them for months before something will eventuate.

It's a very personal and intimate process. I don't know what's going to happen and I do enjoy that. But I'm also impatient; so sometimes I rush and the only thing I can do is stop and walk away. As I'm working through the process and the images assemble themselves, I start to determine the end result.



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Working in collage is hypnotic, emotional and satisfying.

Even though I've surrounded myself with art for the best part of 20 years, I've only just begun to create my own art. I cried the very first time I sat at the new workspace I created for myself and began to assemble my own artworks. I cried because, for the first time in my life, I had actually made the time to make art. I cried because I don't know why I had waited so long to start. Perhaps all of this will be revealed another time in another exhibition, or perhaps it just won't be necessary any longer. I'm here, and I'm excited and happy to be creating. I don't want to stop.

I've loved the manifesto of Dada Art since I read about it as a young teenager. I've loved the works of Art Spiegelman, Egon Schiele, Hannah Hoch, Gustav Klimt, Francisco Goya, Emil Nolde, Diane Arbus, James Gallagher, and Takashi Murakami. There's a list that could fill 30 pages!

I find that my work tends to be provocative, absurd, wishful, improbable, overwhelmingly busy or minimal – it can be anything. I'm happy if they are emotionally evocative so long as they tell a story, no matter how absurd or ambiguous, subtle or confronting. I want to keep exploring.

The rawness of the work is also very appealing to me. I like that I can see where the page is torn, the image cut. It is not slick and it is not perfection. I'm heading down the old road, without my computer. These processes and papery edges combined with the content seduce the viewer into looking intently at the final artwork. They are small but busy, striking and pleasing.

The title, 'through these paper walls' is metaphorical, reflecting on the content of the work. Secret desires, injustices, absurdity and politics – I want to expose injustice in the world. I feel helpless to do anything in a tangible sense, so I vent my frustrations and anger through these very works. ■

www.helengoryart.com



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- 01 Trainspotting, 2013, mixed media, hand cut on rag paper
- 02 I am Columbia Olivia, 2013, analogue collage, 57 x 46cm (framed)
- 03 nothing in the box, mixed media, hand cut on rag paper, 35 x 45cm
- 04 Party room, 2012, analogue collage, 49 x 37cm framed
- 05 Violent times part one, 2012, analogue collage, 34 x 37cm (framed)

Courtesy the artist