Several prominent digital artists were interviewed separately on their unique perspectives toward the growing world of digital art. Their responses all seemed to resonate with each other, at times almost finishing each other's sentences as they all described a process of exploration while harmonizing multiple sources into a single statement.

In this spirit, each artist's original statement has been color coded according to author and brought together using the process they described, in the effort to create an article which digitally illustrates its own point.
We hope you enjoy:

The Digital Mystery Tour

An Interview with:
Dan OBANA - Red
James Spitznagel - Blue
Alain Lacki - Cyan
GISART - Violet
Tiffany Lee Brown - Green
Shifra – Magenta

Article and Cover Image by T. Mikey

First, it is like a candy. The eagerness to work with any new "toy". I remember that the first program I used was Photoshop 2.5. While toying around with the software, I saw that I get much more then just photography, I felt the extension of the possibility to the art. I was curiously in phase with this software, which enabled me to try out quickly, creative ideas that I did not have the possibility to explore before. I felt a fresh surprise in finding out an unexpected shade and feeling of quality. My creative horizon opened with new prospects. I started documenting my street performances with cell phones and other cameras. Those experiments brought me to appreciate more and more the possibilities of the digital medium, it allows me to investigate worlds which belong to me and has tapped in on more creativity then I knew I possessed.

I discovered that all the possibilities offered with the image processing software provides me with important tools that allow me to reflect, with greater control, everything I want to communicate in my creative process. I express all my imagination with a complete freedom that lets my creativity run wild!

Urban Mirage   Digital Print on Canvas   33" x 47"

The first experiments with this software quickly fascinated me and I worked every night to find answers to my creative desires. That experience was a turning point for me, since it allowed me to undertake new projects. This has helped build my art practice immeasurably and there is no end to artistic possibilities. Basic stuff…but, I was so excited that I knew there was no going back.

All this started just a few years ago; I made the transition to digital in 1997. My original medium was mainly pencil and pens. I had a real talent for drawing, it was my passion. At a certain point I took on oil and gauche painting. Most artists stick with what they started out with or found most comfortable to use, sometimes I change. Six years ago I started to produce digital work. I used scans issued from analog films to adapt them on demand. At first I hated it, I was obliged to follow certain constraints. Digital cameras were new when I first started and it is difficult to have the photographic quality of analog. My works were limited to those resolutions. I am not a great fanatic of new technologies, I see them as fragile. The computer slows down, sometimes failed, ran out of batteries, or was difficult to operate. Limitations as regards to the few formats in which the work can be reproduced unless having a very expensive hardware. This transition was very hard and disconcerting. The satisfaction rating is not always up to 100%. With a high learning curve it is very difficult. I could not find smooth operation. I know that sounds kind of odd but my work is a sensitive reflection and I tend to get sucked into a black hole of computer usage, time I could otherwise spend with my hands in the dirt. I discontinued it at one point, but that's no big deal, it was a start.
At the same time, I felt the extension of the possibility to the art. I ended up really loving digital as its own medium. I would highlight the precision of digital tools when creating the work; it shortens the work in a very simple way. You can

control your work immediately, you can verify the expression of models, correct the light. No need to wait for developing, like you made before with Polaroids. The advanced brush function allows me to develop, from beginning to end, the whole creative process. I can expand various ideas and concepts through trial and error and control for myself all the magic corrections I want. I find this development both exciting and amusing.

What is extraordinary with the digital art, it is that it has no limits. More importantly, it can channel seemingly disparate elements into the service of a common concept. Many of my ideas come from music and dreams, a poem, a friend, bad or good news, a stroll in the city, personal values of integrity, expansiveness, and responsibility, a certain perceived light, everything regarding the way we live and relate to each other, all this is stored in my brain.

Parallel Life   Photographic Print   14"x 21"

As far as the technology helping me translate those ideas/visions I guess it would often be the feel, shape and placement of pixels inside each frame, and seeing the hidden details I could not see with my eye. Sometimes when a piece is enlarged, I see images in pixel groupings that are the exact form of expression that I'm trying to achieve. Those details are often an inspiration for a new work. It's like a feedback loop.

La Joueuse   Inkjet Print on Fine Art Paper   24" x 32"

Conventional art has a one-way direction process in work production. The digital technology has a round-way and is interactive. Digital technologies flatten some traditional communication hierarchies while heightening others. It happens very often that the idea of departure evolves as one goes along stages of its creation. Therefore, it is more difficult that I have to decide where to stop the brush than with conventional art. The work itself, beginning to end - may be long and sometimes quite painful, until I declare it finished. I go back to it often to remind myself to "keep it simple." I have to decide where to consent, to compromise and to abandon. Once you get used to it, you stop thinking about it and you concentrate exclusively on the work you are creating, as happens with other techniques.

These days the computer is the tool that I feel most comfortable using… My work explores themes including transformation, language, communication, intimacy, and ephemerality. The digital techniques I use now allow me to advance in this direction, to capture in greater detail everything I wish to express. In a word, it means the appearance of a more wonderful art tool. How do you want I express this vision without the magic of digital software?

Our perception of the art is too often locked into criteria or references of past. Some people think the digital art is not art because all you have to do is press a button and it changes your photograph into a painting. It is less meaningful to offer a counterargument, there's much to be learned by continuing the conversation about why some digital art feels artless to many people. I would tell them that they are never to mistake technique with creativity. Digital technology gives us a lot of choices, the ability to change an image as much as you want without ever losing the original provides a tremendous amount of freedom, but by all means please note that it does not make the process that goes through my mind and imagination any easier. I'm usually assailed by frustration and inspiration alike.

The Two of Dust

My creative works are characterised by the use of the digital collage technique, which follows the same composition criteria as traditional collage. Programs are just like any other art tools. To me they're the same as brushes, cameras or clay. The only change has been the tools I use; the method itself continues to be the same. Line, shape, color, composition, etc…they're all the same no matter what tools the artist uses. Digital technology is a means, not a end (for me) in the creative process. Combining numerous materials and disciplines usually causes both tension and evolution, What people sometimes find hard to realize, is that the computer does not do the work. For me software is just a means to create my vision and my imagery. Digital technology aids in these efforts as a means of documentation, conduit for communication, and means of distribution.

Some people do not take easily to changes or to new technologies. Many of those we currently know (photography, cinema, etc.) were originally questioned and criticised by those who feared change. Yet as audiences, we still seek gatekeepers, because they can help direct our search for "art". Digital art doesn't overthrow the traditional world of art, but rather offers artists new tools, it's the artist that gets to call what they do art….right? The creative impulse sees no barriers between different media and genres.

The creative impulse will hit its chosen artist with a full-body slam, demanding to be manifested. To get what I see with my mind's eye, can be an obsessive creative process where I hole up in the studio and forget to eat or sleep. Recently I walked past an orchid, in my imagination I "saw" a threadlike and contorted woman. I started out by cropping and changing some original colors. I turned the shadow solid black and made the entire background red. I allowed myself to add or remove a flood of details. A particular light of which I had not thought displayed in each layer respectively. An additional detail collected at another moment expands various ideas and concepts which are actually very deliberate. The unlimited potential once assembled, tried to resemble a figurative vision. The virtual presence of imagined other humans, a sensitive reflection. A wonderful digital search for authenticity, a manipulation of the spirit honest to bashful intimacies. I have never shown that piece, very few people were invited to experience it or know about it.


The City #13   Inkjet Print on Fine Art Paper   20" x 15"

Untitled   Digital Photography   20" x 20"

Today I feel that the sky is the limit :) The thinking based on a traditional art genre is getting more expansive and interactive. I think that the development of digital techniques in the art world is constant and unstoppable. Technology has often been compared to the human body, or theorized as an extension of the human body. In turn, it echoes humans, with all our sweet idiocies and short-sightedness. The prejudice of everything against the digital techniques will hopefully be getting gradually lost. Digital art is here to stay, it is just a matter of time before we finally accept this. Digital techniques expand the possibility of the art more deeply, and widely using them or not will depend on the needs of each particular artist and on how they contribute to improving the artist's creative process. The digital tool will open wide the door of the art to everyone, I can see it form right in front of my eyes. It's not a cut-and-dried phenomenon; it's thorny, confusing, fast-changing, and a hell of a lot of fun. Absolutely!

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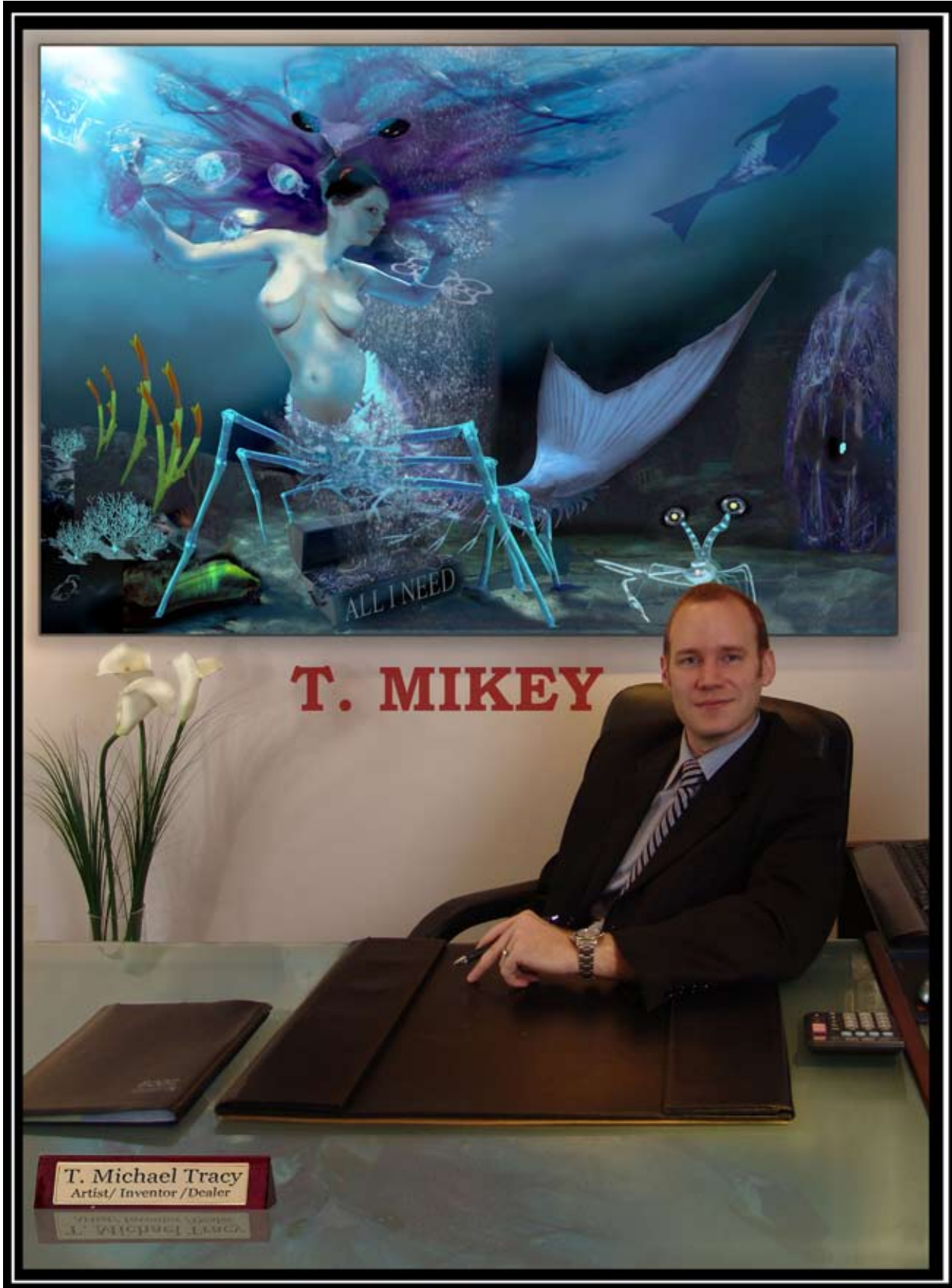
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