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THE ARTS

Jennifer Linton: The marriage of the macabre and the beautiful

By Katie O'Connor

Jennifer Linton is a fearless artist. She breaks the mould of being a convention contemporary artist.

"My work often has these macabre components to it but there's also a sense of estheticism," said Linton, regarding the messages she conveys in her artwork. "Even though my imagery might be grotesque, they're generally not that hard to look at."

With an ever growing collection of artistic experience and inspiration, including a recent Master's degree from [York University](#) in [Fine and Visual Arts](#) and a recently self published book.

Vancouver-native Linton understands what it takes to have thick skin and leave a mark in world of art.

Linton's fascination in the arts began with a keen interest in drawing, a passion that flourished into high school.

In 1992, she graduated from [Sheridan College](#) with an Undergraduate degree in [Art and Art History](#). Her first job she landed was as a graphic designer with Mathews Communication Design, and later in the Pizza Pizza art department.

Ugly/beautiful

Linton said her art represents issues that surround us in our daily lives as well as a figurative meaning that she wants to communicate.

"I've always been interested in figurative work. I think it's a matter of taste and the artists to whom I'm most attracted to," said Linton. "Particularly, since my work deals with issues surrounding gender and more of those socio-political in nature. I found that I had to find a figure."

Linton said her art connects the beautiful and the grotesque.

"But I like the tension between those two compulsions."

"In work that I tend to like as well as create, both the macabre and the beautiful elements exist. They seem to contradict each other but they mesh well together with the messages in the artwork," said Linton. "But I like the tension between those two compulsions."

A naughty alphabet

Linton recently released a self-published novel entitled, *My Alphabet of Anxieties and Desires*. She said she got by "just being a mom."

Linton was a stay-at-home mom at the time; she went on maternity leave and ended up never going back to work. She was at a community drop-in centre and saw a stack of children's books. One book caught her eye.

"I was sitting there looking at the book, seeing A is for apple and so on. I started thinking wouldn't it be funny if I did something more adult," said Linton. "It was part of the compulsion to do something a little bit dark and maybe even a little naughty."



A self-portrait of Jennifer Linton. Fruitful — Gravid series. 2004. Coloured pencil, ink, stencil & composition leaf. 40" x 36"

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LINTON

Jennifer Linton

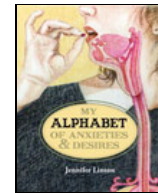
Check out Jennifer Linton's official web based portfolio. Her portfolio includes interviews, awards, bio, a gallery of her work and much more.

The Lady Lazarus Blog

Jennifer's official blog about her art, influences and everything in between.

My Alphabet of Anxieties and Desires

A preview of Linton's self published book, *My Alphabet of Anxieties and Desires*.





Salomé — St. Ursula & the Eleven Thousand Virgins series. 2002. Coloured pencil, drawing ink on mylar. 24.5" x 31.5"

PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER LINTON

In her book, Linton said tried to convey a range of human desires and behaviours such as lust, hunger, violence and jealousy to her audience and to her children.

"They were sort of issues that I thought would come up for my children as they mature."

The Disobedient Dollhouse

Last April, Arpi Kovacs of the [Loop Gallery](#) in Toronto was the curator of an exhibition that Linton participated in for her MFA and PhD in Visual Arts from York University.

Kovacs said he was intrigued Linton's personality, wit and talent intrigued him.

"I think she's very talented and has an especially insightful and playful approach to exploring her relationship with contemporary culture and her interest in story telling."

The work Linton showcased was called, *The Disobedient Dollhouse*. It was a project that included print-based art featuring figures and creatures within an elaborate Gothic-themed paper dollhouse.

Kovacs said he was attracted by her work, which married traditional illustration and with children's fantasy.

"She exploits the relationship between the tradition of illustration, based in the narrative tradition and current cultural issues that are often disguised under surreal forms."

Kovacs also said how he admired the use of historical references found in this piece.

"In this way her work reminds me of illustrations that once accompanied children's morality tales and fables, warning kids of various perils. It is not without coincidence that Jennifer's images are deeply mired in historical references."

Linton does art that intrigues her audience and delivers a wonderful twist of dark humour to her work.

"In general, the most negative thing people say about my work is, I think your work is strange. From my point of view, I take that as a complement."



An Abundant Supply of Milk — Gravid series. 2006. Intaglio print. 15" x 12"

PHOTOCOURTESY OF JENNIFER LINTON

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