January 5, 2018 -

As told to Delia Gonzalez, 905 words.

Tags: Art, Process, Inspiration.

Peer Review: Delia Gonzalez interviews Eli Sudbrack

What do you do when you're creatively stuck?

I work more. I'm totally obsessive. I'm good at multitasking and I'm always working on multiple things at same time, so if I'm stuck with one thing, I just move on to another one. I wish I would respond this question by saying that I go out biking or for a walk or to the beach, but in reality that never happens. I'm very good at focusing on my work when I'm at the studio. I hardly ever leave even for food. Once I'm at the studio, I'm there working for like 8 hours straight—no breaks.

How do you avoid burnout?

I don't. I always work to the max. But I do have rules. I arrive early at my studio everyday around 8am and leave max at around 6pm. I don't work on the weekends. My cell is always on silent even when I'm at the studio. I don't answer or check my phone after I get back home from the studio. And if I go away for holidays I never work. I don't take my computer and avoid my phone as much as possible. So if I'm away I'm really away, no work.

How do you nourish your creative side when you aren't working?

Beach, biking, spending time with my beau without talking about art, reading Marvel comics (old and new), walking, spending time under the sun.

How did you start?

I studied cinema, but for various reasons way too long to describe, when I graduated, cinema was dead in Brazil (I grew up in Rio). Then I decided to move to São Paulo and started to branch out. I got interested in photography and started doing some courses. Then I started to assist this Brazilian artist, Rubens Mano, who became sort of a mentor for me.

I started making my own creative work, but I still didn't call myself an artist. I thought this would be something that would happen to me on the side, more like a hobby. Then I got a job teaching photography to art students at a university. That was another turning point. I realized while teaching classes the importance of engaging different people and friends in what you're doing (I guess I inherited this from cinema). Then, because of this, I also realized that it was important for me to work under a pseudonym that would somehow represent everyone involved and not just my name.

I moved to New York in the late '90s, studied at ICP (a total pretext to be here), and got a job at an internet firm. I didn't do much art until I got fired after 9/11. It was only then that I decided to fully devote myself to making art, while paying my bills cleaning other people's homes.

I didn't have a formal art curriculum. That set me apart. My work in general, and for various reasons, doesn't conform with the art system. I just started "making art" in my late 20s. And I just started calling myself an artist after I moved to NY in my early 30s. So, by then, I was already mature enough to handle the "art thing" with a healthier approach. And I'm still very suspicious and critical about the art world.

How do you start a project?

It varies a lot. Usually I need to visit the space where I will have a show first. I often get inspired by the context of the space or the cultural context. I also often get inspired by the city. But that is not a constant. Once I get minimally inspired by the space/city I start doing a lot of internet research. Then

ideas come to mind. I write down all these ideas so I don't forget them. I make "To Do" Lists more than I draw.

How do you know when a project is done?

I don't. I always overdo everything. I'm a maximalist.

Is it ever ok to abandon a project?

It rarely happens, but it's happened that I forced myself into abandoning a project. It's very hard for me to let it go.

As far as your creative work is concerned, how do you define success? How do you define failure?

Failure doesn't exist. Process is always successful. Success is being able to communicate with others. And controlling this 100% is out of the question, so it's actually hard to predict how you will be "successful."

Eli Sudbrack recommends:

Bret Blevins and Bill Sienkiewicz's *New Mutants*

Rob Liefeld's *X-Force*

John Byrne and Marc Silvestri's *Uncanny X-Men*

Walter Simonson's *X-Factor*

Kenneth Rocafort and Travel Foreman's *Ultimates*

Daniel Acuña's *Uncanny Avengers*

Adrian Alphona's *Ms Marvel*

Andre Lima Araujo's *Avengers A.I*

Phil Noto's *Inhumans: Once and Future Kings*

Gabriel Hernandez Walta's *Astonishing X-Men*

Mike Del Mondo's *Avengers*

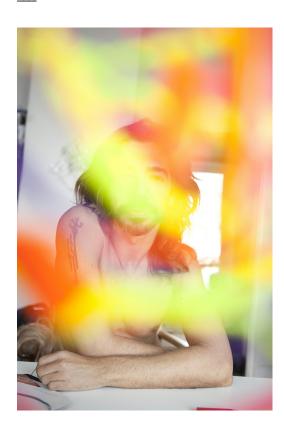John Romita Jr's *Uncanny X-Men*

Andrea Sorrentino's *Old Man Logan*

Frazer Irving's *Uncanny X-Men*

Name
Eli Sudbrack

Vocation
Artist

Fact

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