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As told to Samantha Ayson, 1218 words.

Tags: Writing, Art, Creative anxiety, Inspiration, Mental health, Success.

On not taking yourself too seriously

Writer Gabi Abrão discusses the internet as art class, manifesting the subconscious with AI, and movement as a way of life. I've always admired how you effortlessly weave the internet into your work. It always feels natural. Can you describe how you perceive the internet as a medium?

The internet is such an outstanding realm for endless input, output, collecting, documenting, sharing, archiving...it's its very own art studio. When I feel I am using it properly, as in, I am inspired and enjoying myself, it comes close to being an extreme form of collage art. Like, a scrapbooker's dream. I love that I can go back to my old Tumblr and observe my teenage consciousness, or go into my old tweets and Instagrams to see how I was expressing myself in my early 20s. It's like how when you're stumped on a project, you think you need to create something brand new, never-before-seen, but you really just have to go into your studio and expand on hints in your old work.

The internet is an incredible notepad, with room for some of those notes to evolve into solid ideas, and while you're in your process, you can observe others in their process as well. This is the first time in history that we can get daily updates on the process of our favorite storytellers and artists. It's unreal. I especially love interactive internet art, like memes or retweeting/reblogging inspiration, and getting to see different people's takes on a single context. It's like one big art class if you use it right!

In one sentence, how would you describe the zeitgeist of the internet right now?

Soul-searching with everyone in the room.

What guidance would you offer artists on navigating the current era of the internet?

Don't take your image so seriously that you stop experimenting. Use the internet to connect, collect, take notes, get inspired, tell stories; take advantage of this new medium and use it for whatever feels fun to you. You don't need to get caught up in trends or customs or impressing others. You can do anything you want.



Your "Digital Resting Points" have evolved into a popular meme. I often see people sharing their own online. What do you think makes them resonate with so many people?

I think they are simply a new way to frame pretty scenes we've always shared, and they also speak to a quest-like, video-game-like tone, which has always been innate to the internet's language. Adding "Congratulations! You've reached a digital resting point," over a video creates a frame, or a doorway.

How do you currently engage with AI? Have you considered its hallucinatory and surrealist possibilities with art making?

I love AI art, especially those morphing videos where it feels like you are watching the AI try to compute things in the moment, sort of shrooming and breathing, morphing different faces. I'd rather it look like that than completely accurate because it has such a subconscious and psychedelic quality. I think there's room for both robot poetry and human poetry. I haven't used it yet, though. I just watch everyone else...



Last year, you released a book of poetry, Notes on Shapeshifting. What unexpected lessons did you learn from publishing a book?

Online, I'm used to seeing my work circulate through a series of algorithms that cater to similar age groups and styles that are mostly likely to enjoy it, which in my case is women ages 20-35 who are interested in spirituality and scroll Instagram. Having a book out, I got to watch my poetry reach so many

more people out of that bubble, like elderly men in small towns without social media. Plus, you never know where you'll catch your book: at a thrift store, in someone else's hands at the beach... it's like having a little secret with yourself out there. That was a pleasant surprise. Second, you're never done editing. I am always finding typos and things I could have said "better." You're never done editing! How could you be? Life is process...



Can you talk a bit about the business side of your work and how you sustain your practice?

I am sustained by my Patreon which I've been using for over four years now, and it is one of the few platforms I feel is beneficial for artists, as it is not only a way to gain material support, but is also a nod to traditional artistic rituals. I find it to be the digital version of the "patron-artist" relationship that has existed in art worlds for centuries. It feels like readers dropping in at tea time for more specific break-downs of my work, like an intimate room on the internet. I really enjoy it. It also pushes me to do more research, read, and stay sharp because I love having fresh ideas and high-energy content for subscribers.



During a poetry reading in LA, you said, "the only truth in life is movement." What inspired that?

I remember thinking about the concept of "ruts" or "stagnation" or "creative blocks," and began getting the hunch that they are sort of made up, or an illusion of the mind. I process things through visual metaphors, so I imagined everything that is moving regardless of if I am still or stagnant, for example:

my blood circulating, time passing, the earth spinning. These visuals serve as a reminder of how movement is an inescapable state of being alive. If your blood isn't circulating, you die. If water stays still, it begins to gather bacteria and bugs. Movement is life. Energy is moving, time is moving, life is moving, and we get to have the magical opportunity to steer it all as best we can. But, no matter what, we are moving, moving, moving. If you ever have a problem, whether it's in the mind, heart, or body, I believe the first question one should ask themselves is how can I move through this, with this, beyond this, physically, mentally?

Gabi Abrão recommends:

2% Fage Yogurt with Honey on Top. The most decadent dessert. It tastes like a more simplified cheesecake. I sometimes feel this is as decadent as I should get.

Thinking about Pangaea. I think about Pangaea every day, just this surreal image of one giant land mass uniting us all, and the reminder that natural disasters that alter the surface have always been part of earth's personality.

Live Tweeting. I love live tweeting and catching someone live tweeting about anything. I wish people did it more often, and not just for big events. I'd love to see someone live-tweet a doctor's office waiting room, a mundane road trip..

"Might Be Dead By Tomorrow" by Soko. This was a huge song when I was a teenager that changed everyone's lives and I've had it on repeat again lately. Still the truth.

Dr. Teal's Salt Scrub. I have tried every salt scrub and this is the only one worth your time. Incredible texture. Salt has healing and protective powers in multiple ancient spiritual practices, so I like to think about this while I scrub it all over my body.

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Gabi Abrão

Vocation
writer

Fact

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