



ARTIST PROFILE

An interview with Mixed Greens artist Christina Mazzalupo in her Brooklyn, New York studio

MG: For your upcoming solo show (May 2008) at Mixed Greens, *Types of Kinds: A Study*, you will explore myth, science, and genetics through a wall installation and drawings. What else can you share with us about your show?

CM: *Types of Kinds: A Study* is an overview of various concepts I have been researching and interested in learning more about. The drawings vary in format, ranging from descriptive portraits to detailed charts. The personalities I chose to portray span human, animal, and extraterrestrial lives, and the subject matter ranges from the scientific to the social and individual. The selections are entirely random, and my intention is to illustrate a tiny portion of our giant picture, with all of its possibilities, injustices and ambiguities.

MG: How did you become interested in alien types, unicorns, and the Thylacine?

CM: A few years ago I was searching for images of extinct or prehistoric animals. One particular image had the story of an animal called the “Tas” scrawled on it in handwriting. It wasn’t until a couple of years later, when I stumbled upon the Tas reference again, that I started reading more about the Tasmanian Wolf (Thylacine) and became familiar with its history. I felt an immediate desire to learn as much as I could about this amazing animal that had been forced into extinction. I have since fallen in love with these carnivorous marsupials and hope that at least one of the many stories of sightings over the last 70 years is true.

Mentioning aliens can spark a number of different conversations ranging from government conspiracies vs. mythology, to fear vs. hope, to individual perception vs. mob mentality... but mostly, with concepts like life on other planets, it simply comes down to the desire for answers.

As for unicorns, I feel that they operate as yet another example of the need we have as humans to believe in and attain something greater. Years ago, unicorns were hunted for their horns, which were regarded as commodity—even though the animal didn’t actually exist! This is another example of how ridiculous we human beings can act. Chasing dreams that other people tell us we should chase, wanting things that we are told will bring fulfillment – it is all so very desperate.

MG: Do the portraits in the show differ from the others you have done in the past?

CM: Yes, mostly. These new portraits are not autobiographical or from my imagination, as my work normally tends to be.

MG: Why is your choice of materials, such as aged paper, particularly important for this body of work?

CM: Since the work I am making now looks at stories, theories, and experiences – all of which are impermanent and subject to change at any moment – it makes sense to use a material that reflects that kind of temporality. When I find autograph books or sales receipts from the 1800s and early 1900s, I imagine that I am visiting a brief moment from past lives. These tiny scraps of paper, inked with feelings and experiences, are resurfacing and offering themselves to me for the sake of a new expression. In the show I will also be using vintage labels, like classification tags, that mimic an atmosphere of categorization and display.

MG: Over ten years ago, you started a band called Triple Crème, for which you sing lead vocals and play guitar. Are there any parallels for you between songwriting or music-playing and your visual arts (art-making) process?

CM: When my band plays, we are first having a conversation with each other and then bringing that conversation to the audience and hoping they will listen. When I make art, I am having a conversation with myself and hoping someone will listen. For some reason, it is easier for me to get on stage and disclose my deepest darkest fears, or to draw the most embarrassing self-portrait than to make small talk at a party.

MG: Your work seems so clearly drawn from your daily observations and experiences. What *do* you really think about on a daily basis?

CM: Usually I am completely fixated on what to eat and when I will get to have my next cup of coffee. Sometimes I will realize I won’t be able to have my next cup of coffee until the next morning and I get sad for a minute. Otherwise I think about shirts, money, my childhood, and animals.