



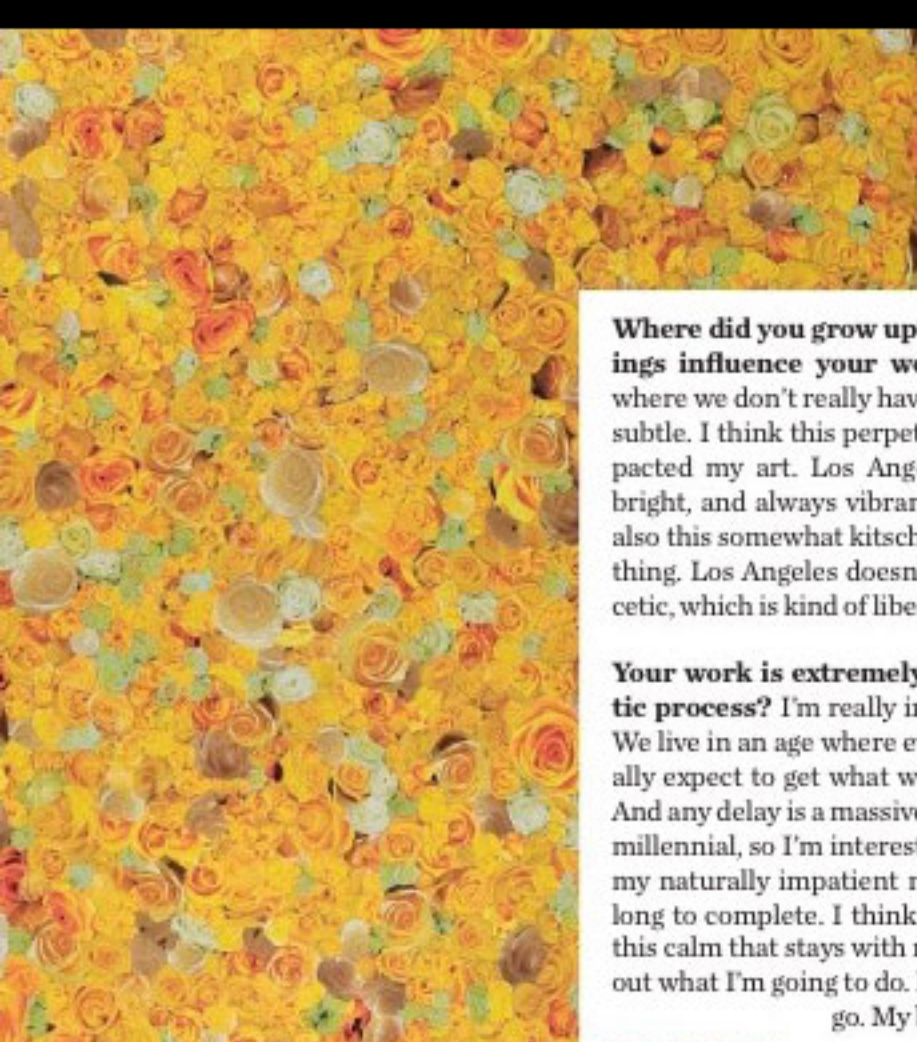
The artist in her New York studio

in full COLOUR

A visit to the New York atelier and universe of rising art star Isabella Huffington

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You might recognise the name – she is the daughter of media mogul Arianna Huffington – but up and coming creative Isabella Huffington is a rising voice in the art scene in her own right. Creating stenciled-and-marker rainbow collages that seem to pay homage to Yayoi Kusama and Keith Haring, the Los Angeles native instantly engages the viewer with skilful masterpieces that aims to install “a sort of meditative peace”. And the formula seems to work. According to *Vanity Fair*, during the artist’s first celebrity-packed solo show, in 2013, “nearly all of Isabella’s paintings had sold by seven p.m. – a staggering achievement for an art-history student completing her senior year at Yale University”. *AD Middle East* met the wonder girl in her New York Soho studio.



RADAR new talent

Where did you grow up? And how did your surroundings influence your work? I grew up in Los Angeles, where we don’t really have seasons. The changes are more subtle. I think this perpetual feeling of summer really impacted my art. Los Angeles is always colourful, always bright, and always vibrant. But at the same time there is also this somewhat kitsch unreality that permeates everything. Los Angeles doesn’t really have a set culture or aesthetic, which is kind of liberating, because anything goes.

Your work is extremely detailed. What is your artistic process? I’m really interested in the idea of patience. We live in an age where everything is so fast paced. We really expect to get what we want exactly when we want it. And any delay is a massive inconvenience. I’m very much a millennial, so I’m interested in using my art to counteract my naturally impatient nature, since each piece takes so long to complete. I think making the art I make gives me this calm that stays with me for the day. I don’t really plan out what I’m going to do. I just start and correct errors as I go. My best ideas have come out of failed projects.



Working on her collages

How do you expect your work to affect viewers? I’m interested in my work giving viewers a sort of meditative peace. There is so much going on around us all the time that I want people to be able to pause in front of my work and really take a moment. I want my work to uplift people and give them a sense of whimsy and wonder. I also think my work has layers. I’m interested in people unwrapping each element.

How does the environment around you impact your studio life? I live in New York, which unlike Los Angeles, has really tough seasons. When I moved to the east coast I wasn’t really ready for the overcast days and lack of light. My studio is crammed with lamps in every available spot. I want to create a really warm and bright environment. I never really realised it until now, but I suppose I’m mimicking the environment I grew up in. I also have a lot of flowers and colour everywhere. My studio has become sort of a refuge, especially in the winter.

Which are your favourite art spots in New York? I love the Frick. New York museums can be so crowded and overwhelming that the Frick serves this wonderful contrast. It’s never too crowded and it feels like a real retreat from the city. I really love Mandalas, so the Buddhist wing of the Met is one of my favourite spots too. Like the Frick, it’s never really that crowded and it really allows you to just be with the art. But I think my absolute favourite thing to do is visit other artists’ studios because you can get a real sense of who they are when you’re in their space.

Are any of your pieces self-portraits? The third painting I made was a self-portrait. I was sixteen and it was this collage of everything and everyone I loved. I think it was really indicative of who I was at the time, which was an amalgamation of other people.

You have also done some political work, reflecting on the United States’ war involvement... I think it’s really easy to forget we’re at war. For many of us, the fact that we’re not faced with the realities of war can make us really apathetic. It’s very easy for our lives to seamlessly go on without ever really having to think about it. Nowadays, it is far too easy to be complacent.

Any guilty pleasures? I love country music, bad detective novels and murder mysteries.

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