



PARALLEL UNIVERSE

MIAMI-BASED PAINTER ISABEL BRINCK BRINGS VIEWERS INTO A COLOR-INFUSED WORLD OF INTENSE EMOTIONS AND COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS.

WRITTEN BY SHANNON SHARPE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY SONYA REVELL



In her Miami studio, artist Isabel Brinck (below) works on a piece that will be one of many in her new series, *Oneiric* (meaning related to dreams), which is headlined by the large artwork, *Scarlet*, shown opposite. Conducting her work in the open studio space, the “walls” (left) were outfitted with wheels to easily configure different environments depending on her work flow.

Artist Isabel Brinck straddles a divide between fantasy and reality. Her vivid, graphic oil-and-acrylic paintings reveal a dreamlike world—a place where time has no meaning and forms speak aloud. It’s a place full of bright colors and distorted figures—a place where anyone is welcome. “I’ve realized that art allows me to invent another world,” says the Miami-based, Chilean-born Brinck. “But I use experiences in life to shape that world.” And those real-life experiences—from childhood innocence to the complexities of adult relationships—are what keep one toe of her work dipped in the water of reality. “The loneliness, the sexuality, the disappointments, the illusions, the intimacy,” says the artist, “it’s all there in that giant puzzle of mine.”

After hearing Brinck’s passion as a painter, it is surprising to learn this career was not always her plan. While her love for the medium is lifelong, and she has always painted on the side, she spent 12 years working as a graphic designer before making the leap to full-time painter. The career change was sparked by Brinck’s frustration with the evolution of graphic design. “Things became more automated,” she says. “I wanted to communicate in a more gestural fashion.” So, in 2000, she took the plunge and dedicated herself completely to oil painting. “Oil is by far my favorite technique,” she says. “I usually start a painting with acrylic because it’s easier and dries faster, but that’s only the beginning. I then invite oil into the scene and, once you do that, there’s no going back to acrylic on the same piece.”

It’s now been nearly two decades since Brinck’s career transition, and she’s found success in both her home and adopted countries, with a multitude of solo and group exhibitions since 2001. Of



"I am not a 'messy' artist," says Brinck, who uses her Pinterest-inspired shelf (below) to help organize books, portfolios and papers. In a similar fashion, she keeps her pencils and paints neatly separated—a product of her disciplined demeanor (right and above, right). Brinck starts working on projects by subconsciously doodling (far right), which she finds most therapeutic and productive, and after drawing the illustrations on large canvases—sometimes as tall as 8 feet high—and adding color, they truly come to life (opposite).



recent note, she was represented at Art Basel Miami in December, and she has an upcoming show at the Chaco Art Fair in her native city of Santiago, Chile. "The thought of going back to Chile to show everyone how I've evolved in my time away since I last presented my art there is very exciting," she says. "I made two big colorful paintings specifically for this fair that are a little different from my current series of work. I'm trying to create more of a contrast between the figure and the background so that the pieces will grab a viewer's attention from afar and draw them in for a closer look."

Brinck is also helping other creatives promote their work. She partnered with fellow artist Laura Villarreal on Rubber Stamp Art Projects, an initiative that gives emerging artists opportunities to promote themselves in various markets, be it through curating exhibitions, participating in fairs or even editing books. But no matter what project she's working on, the main focus of Brinck's work is the emotion behind it. "I want viewers to feel their emotions running wild," she says. "I want them to enter the dream world I enter when I'm painting." But, the artist acknowledges and accepts that these emotions may not always be the same as her own. "In this crazy melting pot of people, not everyone will have the same take on my paintings," Brinck says. "If I can achieve a dialogue with the viewer I will be content, but the main dialogue I intend to achieve is with myself." **L**

