

# Artist Georganne Aldrich Heller Transcends Trends Into Fine Art Collage

By Nicole Borgenicht

An artist who develops art stories that correlate with current modes of thinking, Georganne Aldrich Heller, creates collages that affect our consciousness in different ways. Whether a funny angle of our world in style and humor, or a symbol of strength and gender curiosity, pure sensitivity or travel themes, we are drawn to her symbiotic

nature with the world around us. Ingenuity about fashion and style in these collages is second nature to Heller. While her couturier father's work had engulfed Heller's childhood, she then became a well-seasoned fashion woman, artsy with hats and jewelry, accessorizing Georganne Aldrich Heller's chic

wear. Trends are a topic in every aspect of our lives, from fashion style to the psychological aspect of how we envision others and ourselves. Her art has been considered Dadaist, Pop, and Contemporary. It is certainly a combination of genres, and quite Trend-Tao: personifying the progression of life.

Furthermore, in the beautiful collage work Heller creates, one gathers a sense of time and relationship through its multifarious objects, and the overall expression or collection context. There is an absurdist theme

involved in most of the pieces - something to make you laugh. Without commercial goals to follow trends, Heller tells her story from within. Georganne Aldrich Heller says, "Because I am constantly collecting items for my art, I tend to rely more on what inspires me - I have a visceral or emotional response to it rather than what is currently trending."

In her collage *Spy*, the female subject appears to be a modern super hero made of art. *Spy* has been exhibited in three shows. Since the original collage had been sold, Heller says, "The piece was so much in demand, I decided to make some Giclee prints and still have one of them framed and available now." She insists on only top quality Giclees that look like they are an actual collage.

Giclees are popular, and the price is affordable. Heller explains in her experience the reason to carefully choose a great Giclee printer and why it's important: "At first I worked with a Giclee printer because I could never bear to say goodbye to a piece that has been sold and wanted a copy as close as possible to the original. Later on, I realized that having a few Giclee prints of something I particularly loved could be good sales, too! Or, if I entered a show where price points were not at a



*Engagement*

very high level.”

The compelling female image of Spy shows uncommon vitality and strength. Heller says, “To me, she symbolizes the hope I had when I created it several years ago, that women would finally empower themselves. What I call the arrogance of her stance is meant to represent a woman who has no qualms or fear of being in charge and says ‘I can handle this. I can be in charge.’” Says Heller.

Spy is energized with mixed media from end to end; Heller shares how she decides a piece like Spy is complete. “The hardest thing in creating a collage that has a center like this does, is always realizing when you are done. I often find I put too many pieces together. When I put the piece on the floor, walk away and then come back, I



*Spy*

can see that the completion happened before some of the things I added, which then have to be eliminated. It’s kind of like what Coco Chanel said: ‘When you’re getting ready to go out, look in the mirror and take off the last accessory you put on.’”

On how she started the collage Spy, Heller shares, “I started with the interesting red paper that was part of a wrapping used for some China that was sent to my house. The next thing I laid on was a piece of wrapping paper with mannequin figures. I added clip art and some broken eyeglass frames from my collection and it just came together. I purposely left one eye looking outward while I clouded the other eye to imply the figure was contemplating and thinking of her next move.”

Without a face at all, Heller’s fashion pieces are equally provocative. Suit is a great example of the Dada style with absurdist humor some of Heller’s works are known for.



*Suit*

In this mixed media collage, Heller shares her process. “I had a big page with book listings and started tearing them up in pieces, when it suddenly occurred to me that they would be great on this boy’s suit. Next, I found an Armani tag and a certificate of autenticita from another garment and I felt the humor of adding them. One would know for sure it would not be their simple and elegant style that one associates with Armani. But for me, I just love the contrast. The piece seemed unfinished, so I started looking through my collection of



*Coffee Girl*

baubles, buttons and beads and found three wonderful buttons for the front. I added the white collar and put the piece to one side. I love to insert humor into my work and the piece seemed to lack a little humorist touch as well as something that would say 'This collage is complete'. A friend, who liked the collage as it was, gave me a little pair of boy's shoes and a carpenter friend, who looked at the piece, suggested I put a shelf underneath so I could add the shoes that I thought were just so perfect. He built that little platform for me. When I added the shoes, I was so delighted! It gave the piece a whole new dimension and made me say:

'Yes, this is complete!'"

Coffee Girl is a collage with wonderful poise and characters, and again the humor edge of media as image is interjecting coffee filters as one of the elements. This piece seems to tell a story with a postcard. Heller tells us about it. "Coffee Girl is called that because in a short class at the Craft Museum here in Los Angeles, the teacher showed us how charming coffee filters are when mixed with other decorative papers or fabrics. I feel that the postcard is from a secret lover who has left her quite bewildered, as you can see by the expression on her face. I wanted her to be dressed to go out but to look hesitant about whether she would go or not. I readied her by a lovely lace hat, flower behind her ear and a necklace from my collection of jewels, stones, string, and paper that can end up as a necklace on one of my collage dolls. Hopefully Coffee Girl is looking tentative about whether to meet with the man on the postcard or



*Los Angeles*



*Marriage*

just dream about him instead."

One of Georganne Aldrich Heller's unique series is of dresses representing life and everything between. She explains, "I named my first four dresses as Stepping Out, Engagement, Marriage, Divorce, and imagined what would be the best attire for someone going through any of those stages in their life. I particularly like when the series is shown together to give the full impact. Having been married many times myself; I am more than familiar with all four of these phases."

Fashion is an ever-present muse for Heller; she highlights her favorite event.

"The best show I've ever attended was the Alexander McQueen collection in London, because I pictured every part of one dress for the beginning of an amazing collage. Sometimes his fabric buttons and jewels struck me more as a collage



*London*

then a beautiful couture outfit to wear.”

In addition to fashion, a stimulating mentor and co-exhibitor is the artist, Larisa Pilinsky. Heller says, “I love Larisa Pilinsky’s work, and sharing shows with her has been some of my greatest pleasures. The great joy in my having found Larisa as the most perfect teacher; she is also an inspiration to me at all times!”

A world traveler, Heller says London is like a second home and holds a special place in her heart. Furthermore, Georganne Aldrich Heller is a producer specializing in Irish Theatre worldwide, with a recent awarded show’s actor in London. Heller describes the background and depth of feeling for her collage London.

“London is in its current political war with Brexit, always in the news. I’m thinking of the soldiers as guarding the values we, as Americans, have always had regarding the Brits. Many of my

we remember are torn down. I’m afraid the amazing old fashioned, two decker buses that we all recognize will be replaced by ugly modern buses. The phone booths and the buses immediately told someone you’re in London. The soldiers protect, to this day, Buckingham Palace and, in my collage, are saving the old elegance. The red symbolizes the war that’s lasted forever in Northern Ireland with England and it might never totally resolve.”

On collage objects to collect and keep in the studio: “When I travel, I am always looking to pick up new, fun, silly, or original pieces that I know will one day appear in one of my works.” Yet, when Heller is settled in one location, east or west coast, she has a staple of items. “What is necessary for my studio is that there are always boxes of buttons, broken jewelry, pieces of china, different colors of lace, gold ropes, zippers, interesting magazines from which I can

happiest times were spent in London on holiday and producing theatre at London’s Soho Playhouse. I don’t want the values to disappear. Almost all the phone booths

extract images I am looking for, wrapping paper, gift papers, wallpaper and fabric samples and feathers, just to name a few.”

**Artist Tip:** “I find a basic glue gun to work the best for me, especially since I am adding buttons, pieces of metal, screening, sometimes earrings or eyeglasses - they will not end up sticking as well without a glue gun. Also, at times, crazy glue is useful.”

In terms of vision for the future, Heller says, “I’m always creating my own trends. My new partner is a sculptor and extremely creative as an artist and many realms. We are thinking of collaborating on a huge wall sized collage combining his drawings and my eclectic contribution.”

Having exhibited nationally and internationally in numerous shows from New York to Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Mexico, Spain and Italy, she has enjoyed many gallery shows and a museum exhibit all that feature collage art as a prominent genre. Heller says, “Hopefully my work is headed toward inclusion in some of the amazing art fairs taking place today in either New York or Los Angeles and will be picked up by a gallery appreciating and specializing in the art of collage.”

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