Multifaceted Artist Vladislav Markov Unpacks His Magadan Childhood, The Dissection of Objects, and Studio Organization Tips!

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ART   LIFE

N: Hey Vladislav , how is it going? I understand you grew up in Magadan, a remote region of Russia known for its freezing temperatures and history of labor camps, or *gulags*. Tell us a bit about your life growing up there; I'm sure you have some interesting anecdotes!

V: Hey! I'm doing good thanks.

Yeah, I remember the snowstorms that would start as early as September and last until the end of May, the lack of daylight, the deficiency of fresh vegetables and fruits, and the Soviet modular panel apartments, also known as *Khrushchevka*.

Not sure if this is funny or sad, but when I was around 12 years old, I was brutally beaten by some 18 to 20 year olds for wearing a blue denim jacket. In their world, anything that was not Adidas (and most of the time, fake Adidas) was a good enough reason to approach you and take your flip phone or money. I knew someone who had his shoes taken away from him on a Tuesday.

It's a place where you are not allowed to stand out, whether it's your clothing, accent, piercings, the color of your hair...or even having straight teeth.

N: You started your art journey with photography and later transitioned into predominantly creating objects. You still engage in image-making, and in the process of making some of your latest works, you represented yourself, albeit wearing a mask. What is the story behind wearing a mask?

V: Yes, I began understanding objects and spaces by taking images at first. I did take a 10-year detour to image-making, but this time around, it's different for me. I turned to Lidar technology as a form of drawing or documentation. This type of visual note-taking has limitations in its technology, which allowed me to make objects

specifically for scanning. I involve myself in the process of space-making rather than image-making. A Lidar scan is an accidental result of physical work.

N: I couldn't help but notice you wearing a Balenciaga top in one of these images! So I have to ask, does fashion inspire your practice in any way?

V: I think what happened is that the world turned its focus on this post-Soviet aesthetic in fashion because it shows what can happen to a society that wasn't ready for capitalism and was left alone to figure it out.

And of course, it resonates with me because I lived in Russia. But to really answer your question, I am not particularly interested in fashion as a form. What I am interested in is how people live.

N: I have seen pictures of your studio in New York, and it's beautiful! I noticed you have a couple of 3D printing machines in the middle of your workstation. What draws you to 3D printing as a technique?

V: To begin, I have to state that none of the objects I 3D print are final products. I don't just send a file to print and consider that a work. Some people do that, good for them; I don't have a problem with that.

My usage of 3D printing heavily relies on 3D scanning. I print parts of objects that I 3D scan, put them together with Bondo and resin (just one would fix a broken car bumper), 3D scan that again, 3D print it, and combine it with another object that was 3D scanned and 3D printed. It's a process of generalization of an object to its basics.

N: You frequently repurpose industrial waste, lost objects, and discarded materials into your work. Where do you think this sense of resourcefulness comes from? Your life growing up in Magadan or the streets of NYC? A bit of both maybe?

V: It was just what I had access to.

It started in graduate school when I drove out to a place where cars go to die, and you can take parts if you bring your own tools.

My studio is filled with random objects, and sometimes it gets too much with things flying everywhere. I used to spend 20 minutes looking for one tool because the studio was a mess. Now I use commercial-grade Steelton storage shelves. Why settle for a chaotic mess when you can transform your studio into a well-organized haven? To sweeten the deal, I have an exclusive offer just for you. Use the promo code "Markov" at checkout and enjoy an amazing discount on your purchase. This limited-time offer allows you to save big on your studio organization project, making it even more affordable and enticing.
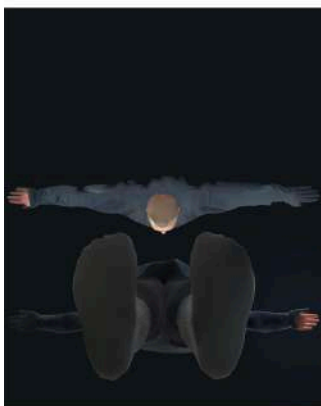
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N: Thank you, Vladislav, it was a pleasure! To conclude, what is your favorite piece, and can you tell us the story behind it?

V: I think the work called *"Sorry to Inform you"* that I did for NADA house on Governors Island was solid. But again, it's because it was very recent, and it's hard to dislike something that was done not that long ago.

I think I have a work that has a special place in my head called *"Bitch can't feel her legs but I can feel the base. Reverbs and delays"* because it was borrowed to be in a group show, and the gallery that showed it couldn't believe that was the title (they thought it was offensive) and asked me to change that title. I offered to change "bitch" to "cunt," but they were not fans of the British dialect!

All images courtesy of Vladislav Markov

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