ALL TRUE TOMBOYS

by Christina Schlesinger
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TOMBOYS

The Tomboy paintings are based on images and memories of myself as a tomboy and were painted on my tomboy clothing: jeans, flannels, and T-shirts. I fought with my mother over wearing dresses. I wanted to wear pants, shoot marbles, and ride my bike really fast. I led a little gang that stole comic books from Scannel’s drug store. That bright and sturdy tomboy spirit saved and saves me.
1. Radiant Tomboy
   oil and mixed media
   on canvas, 40” x 30”

2. Tomboy on Blue Flannel Shirt with Collar
   oil, photo transfer and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

3. Marbles
   oil, photo transfer and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

4. Party Dress and Shell
   oil, photo transfer and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

5. Jacks
   oil, photo transfer and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

6. Big Dyke on Red
   oil and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

7. Tomboy with Davy Crockett
   oil, photo transfer and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

8. Tomboy Portrait on Yellow Flannel Shirt
   oil and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”
9. *All the Little Girls*
   oil, photo transfer and mixed media
   on canvas, 20” x 16”

10. *Tomboy Portrait with Sun Glasses on Blue Flannel Shirt*
    oil and mixed media
    on canvas, 20” x 16”

11. *Tomboy Portrait with Sun Glasses and Batman Hat on Yellow Flannel Shirt*
    oil, photo transfer and mixed media
    on canvas, 20” x 16”

12. *Tomboy and Little Brother Wearing Davy Crockett Hats*
    oil, photo transfer and mixed media
    on canvas, 20” x 16”

13. *Party Dress and Rose*
    oil, photo transfer and mixed media
    on canvas, 20” x 16”

14. *LA Tomboy*
    oil, photo transfer and mixed media
    on canvas, 24” x 18”

15. *Tomboy and Little Brother*
    oil, photo transfer and mixed media
    on canvas, 24” x 18”
DILDOS

The “feminist nudes” or “dildo” Tomboy paintings show a confident female body, from neck to thigh, arms on hips or crossed over the chest, in a both defiant and relaxed attitude, occasionally wearing a dildo. The dildos certainly give an added dimension. I did not want to be a boy, just a girl with something extra for a while.
16. Red Boxers and Dildo
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

17. Hands on Hips, Pink
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

18. Pink, Background, Hands on Hips, Dildo
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

19. Arms on Hips, Black Strap, Green Background
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

20. Jeans and Shell
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”
21. *Dildo and Beach*
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

22. *Arms Crossed, Jeans Down, Tan*
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

23. *Sweatshirt Up, Hands on Hips, Pink*
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

24. *Back View, Tan Line, Red Boxers*
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”

25. *T-Shirt, Dildo, Green Background*
   oil on canvas,
   24” x 18”
LESBIAN SEX

The “Tomboy Sex” etchings are drawn and etched on zinc plates, printed onto cloth, and then attached to torn up clothing. This practice of using material, often my own clothes, in my work is long-standing.
26. *Shield*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 11” x 14”

27. *Small Red Plaid Shirt Lotus*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 11” x 14”

28. *Small Blue Check Shirt Lotus*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 11” x 14”

29. *FF*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 24” x 18”

30. *Horizontal Red Check*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 11” x 14”
31. *Pink Horizontal on Blue Plaid Shirt*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 24” x 18”

32. *Horizontal Hunters*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 12” x 16”

33. *Black Horizontal on Pink*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 12” x 16”

34. *Tryptich*
   etching and mixed media
   on canvas, 16” x 12”

35. *Romaine Brooks and Me*
   oil on canvas, 20"x30"

36. *The L Word*
   oil on canvas, 30” x 40”
CHRISTINA SCHLESINGER

Early years

Radcliffe College, Harvard University, 1968 English and Fine Arts major, graduated cum laude.

Summer 1968 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, memory of teachers Philip Pearlstein and Ben Shahn were that Pearlstein criticized my drawings for having a too hard, cartoonish edge and that Shahn defended my work in a critique for which I was immensely grateful. Painted an anti-war fresco in fresco barn with artist Mike Henderson.

1971-1980

Lived in Venice, California became involved with feminism and community art.

Attended Feminist Studio Workshop at Cal Arts studying with Judy Chicago and Mimi Shapiro, but left to co-found first the Citywide Mural Project and then SPARC, the Social and Public Art Resource Center, with muralist Judy Baca, and work for the city of Los Angeles as a community mural organizer and painter. As a community muralist I worked with street gangs in East Los Angeles and Watts creating murals in parks and on city walls; I also worked with seniors and children painting murals in senior centers and schools.

SPARC continues to this day as one of the most pre-eminent public art organizations in California.
1981-1990

Moved to New York City. Residencies at the Cummmington Community of the Arts led to a series of waterfall and birch tree paintings, which I exhibited in the East Village at and later in Soho and Los Angeles:

1988, “Twenty-One Ways of Looking at a Waterfall”, Trabia-MacAffee Gallery, Soho
1991, “Paintings from the Birch Forest”, Hal Katzen Gallery, NYC, NY
1991, “Birch Paintings”, Jan Baum Gallery, Los Angeles, CA


During this time, I also participated in numerous group shows in the East Village and elsewhere including the Clocktower, Fashion Moda and PS 1.

A summer spent at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangchow, China studying Chinese brush painting, brought more immediacy and a calligraphic line to my painting.

During this time I worked in all five boroughs of New York City schools in the Learning through an Expanded Arts Program, (LEAP) with primary school students teaching print-making, Chinese calligraphy, collage, mask-making, and paintings murals.
Became involved again with feminist politics as part of a group of anonymous women artist political activists (the Guerrilla Girls). We created posters decrying sexism and racism in the art world and in the dead of night plastered Soho with our posters. As GG’s we made an impact on the art world discourse and practice of treatment of women in the arts although there still remains enormous amounts to do.

Received a Pollock-Krasner Grant in 1988
Received a Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Grant in 198

1991- 1995

Was fortunate to return to my roots in public art and received several large mural commissions under the percent for art construction program. In Los Angeles, I painted “The Big Splash” at the Greyhound Terminal in downtown Los Angeles and “Chagall Comes to Venice Beach” in Venice at the Israel Levin Senior Center. The Chagall mural was also a SPARC commission. The original mural was destroyed in 1994 in an earthquake. The murals was so popular I was brought back to repaint it in 1996, and it gained a new title, "Chagall Returns to Venice Beach." I also painted “The Fire Mural” at the DD Bean Match Factory in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, and “The Peaceable Kingdom” in the Bronx at the Kennedy Child Study Center. I also received a SITES grant from the NY Board of Education, another percent for art program, and painted a mural in the auditorium of PS 190 in East New York.
In 1994, I returned to school, receiving my MFA from Rutgers. My thesis show was a series of paintings on being a tomboy. The paintings and etchings were based on images of myself as a young tomboy and a grownup lesbian. I painted and collaged onto my own ripped up T-shirts and flannel shirts. At Rutgers I also taught first year paintings and drawing classes.

1996-2005


From 1996-2005 I taught cultural history, art history and studio art at the Ross School, a private school in East Hampton. Ross is an independent school in East Hampton with an integrated spiral curriculum focused on project based learning and team teaching.

In 1999, I adopted my daughter, Chun, from China. Being a mother led to my “Dorothy” paintings, a series of large mixed media canvases based on a 1950’s coloring book of “The Wizard of Oz”. With the Dorothy paintings, I continued the practice of adhering materials to canvas as part of the painting. These paintings were exhibited at the AE Gallery in East Hampton in 2001 and their Merz Gallery in Sag Harbor in 2003.

At a workshop at Ross I learned encaustic painting, which has gradually become one of my preferred mediums.
2006-2008

Moved back to NYC, taught at York Prep in Manhattan. At York I was given the opportunity to create an art history course for seniors. I designed the course around teaching students “to see” art as an artist does and all units were based on exhibitions in New York City museums and galleries.

Showed small encaustic paintings in Sag Harbor at the Merz Gallery and the Springs Invitational in East Hampton. However during this time I was primarily involved with the illness and death of my sister and father.

2009-2012

Diagnosed with stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma in late 2008. Treatment and recovery from complications lasted until early 2010. During this time did no painting

 Returned to studio and began making abstract paintings in encaustic on material. These have now been shown at TOAST, the Springs Invitational in East Hampton, and Gallery Ehwa in Provincetown in a group show titled “Polylogue”.

2012-2014

Honored by City of Los Angeles as a co-founder of SPARC. Oct. 22nd, 2012, is declared SPARC day in Los Angeles.


Taught encaustic at The Art Barge, Amagansett, summer 2013, 2014

Created a series of artist books.
Began a series of large-scale works on paper of faces.

2015
