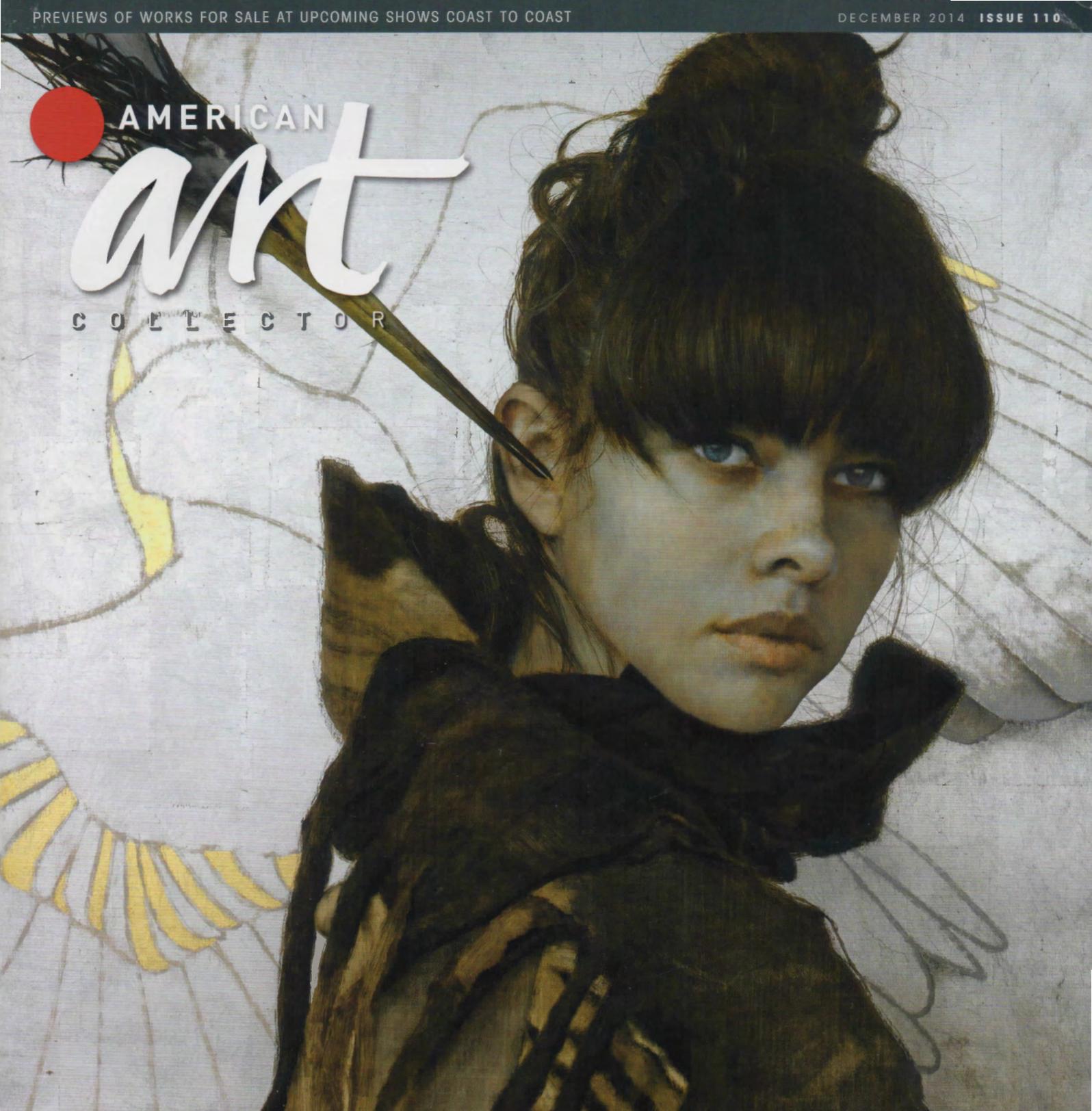
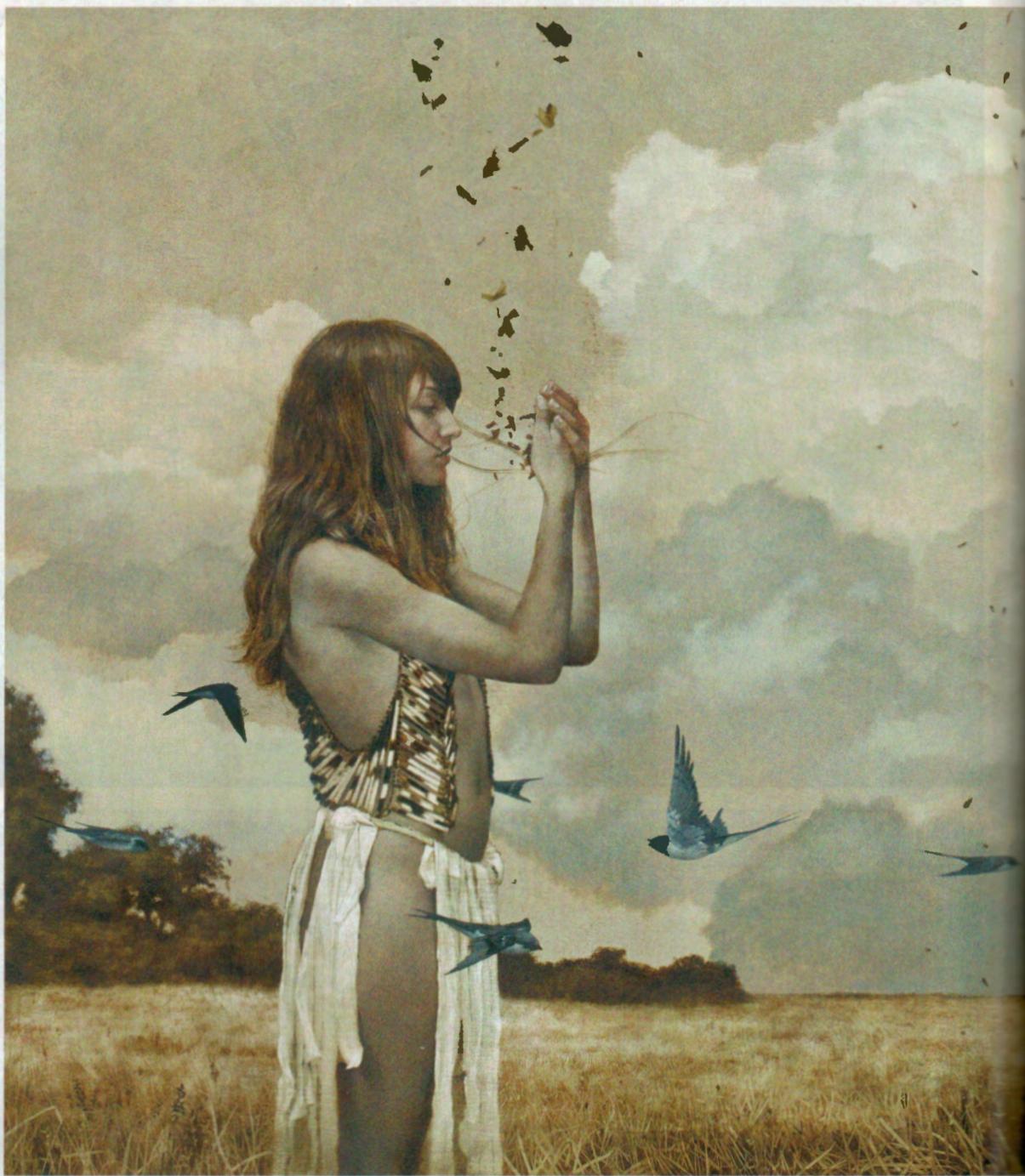




AMERICAN
art

COLLECTOR





BELONGING & BECOMING

Brad Kunkle offers a multimedia investigation into the journeys and paths of one's life. **BY JOSHUA ROSE**

The *Belonging*, the name of one of Brad Kunkle's new paintings as well as the video he has created that will be projected on the surface of the painting during his opening at the Arcadia Contemporary in New York City, is not only one of Kunkle's most complex paintings to date, but it is also the first multimedia collaborative project he has attempted thus far.

"I've always been a fan of Bill Viola's video work," says Kunkle, who works out of his studio in Brooklyn. "But recently, I went to an exhibition of Ann Hamilton,



1
The Belonging (Day),
oil and silver leaf on
linen panel, 36 x 64"

and as I was waiting in the hallway to get in to see it, I noticed some paintings on the wall. When I left, I looked at the same paintings and thought how affected I had been by the video and how I needed to do something more than painting."

The Belonging is more than 5 feet across and features two women standing in a field with their hands placed strategically in front of their faces. In the middle, a giant bank of clouds emerges from behind golden leaves and acts as a barrier between the two. Blue sparrows fly between the two figures, while scrapes and

bits of leaves ascend from their hands into the heavens. On the cloudbank, Kunkle will project still images of the models from the same photo shoot.

"When you think of where we are now," says Kunkle, "and with the popularity of social media, everyone seems obsessed with capturing a moment rather than experiencing it. To me, it is interesting to have that frozen frame but to also allow the experience of that moment to run through it."

Kunkle created the video along with artists Toree Arntz and Taiana Giefer, two

fashion designers out of California. The two created the beautiful headdresses and outfits many of his figures wear in his paintings. One such design is a vest made entirely from porcupine needles.

Once the video was shot, Kunkle taught himself Final Cut Pro and completed the video. Then a friend named Matt Taylor—who Kunkle had played with in several different musical acts over the years—helped him write, record and compose the score for the video piece.

"It's Bill Viola meets classical painting," says Kunkle.



Scan for VIDEO

2
Magnetic Fields 1, oil, gold and silver leaf on linen panel, 20 x 16"

3
Where the Currents Meet (study 2), oil and gold leaf on linen panel, 17 x 11"

4
The Near, Far, and Leading, oil, gold and silver leaf on linen panel, 32 x 35"

5
 Brad Kunkle painting Permaid. Photo courtesy Aeschleah DeMartino and Nicolette Mishkan ©2014.

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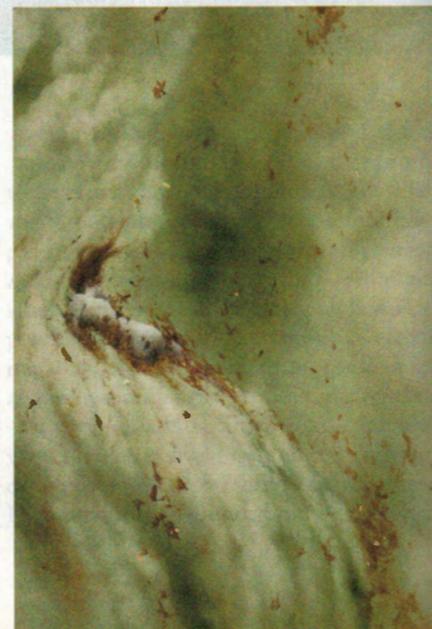
Birds, too, are an important subject for the artist, who has longed been captivated by the beauty of the natural world as well as the creatures that inhabit it.

"This is an evolution of what my work has been about since the beginning," says Kunkle. "Over the years, I thought of how we struggle with who we are or with the journey or path we have taken. And, to me, birds are fascinating because they have this direction sense, they know where to fly, a sixth sense of knowing where to go. And, to me, that is a metaphor for being able to just follow your instincts or intuition and create your own paths."

The ideas are also influenced by writings by Joseph Campbell on the idea of detribalization in society.

"When you think of the questions like where is my path and where should I be going, Campbell raised the idea of shedding all those preconceived boundaries and masks we are given by those around us in order to find out who we really are and what we really want. It's not what those around us want for us, so one has to get rid of the tribe to truly find oneself."

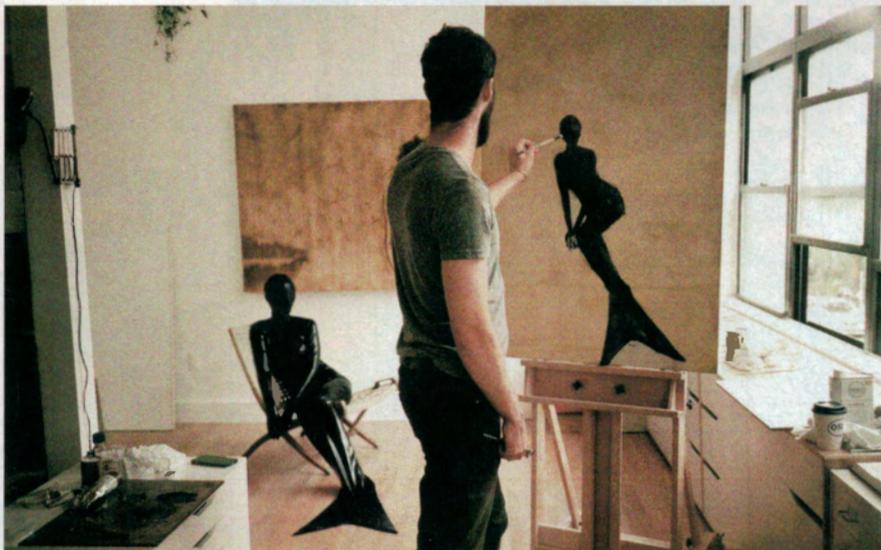
That is why many of the paintings in this exhibition play upon this idea of birds. In the piece titled *The Orientation*, a crane whispers into the ear of the female model. In another, *The Near, Far, and Leading*, cranes glide and swoop around another female model who wears a wreath of golden leaves. In both, the birds are half finished,



3



4



5

with much of their bodies appearing as lines on the canvas.

"I wanted to give the impression that they are part of the wallpaper pattern and are coming to life," says Kunkle. "They are literally coming to life in front of the characters." ●

BRAD KUNKLE: NEW WORKS

When: December 11-31, 2014

Where: Arcadia Contemporary,
51 Greene Street, New York, NY 10013

Information: (212) 965-1387,
www.arcadiacontemporary.com