





for my parents,
Mrs. María Luz Donaty & my late father, Dr. Gerald Raymond Donaty
to whom I owe my charm



Profoundly *Playful*

Dana Donaty



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All Stars
2014



Freaky
2016



Top Dog
2016

Expect the Unexpected

by Bruce Helander

Having followed Dana Donaty's work for several years, I can attest to her very high standard of consistency in imagery and inventiveness. In fact, after carefully examining her latest series of works, I have come to expect the unexpected in terms of sheer innovation.

At a first glance by someone who may be unfamiliar with her artwork, one might assume that all these wonderful hybrid creatures come from a collection of secondhand and department store objects, which serve as inspirational still-life models and a studio guideline for accuracy. But, in fact, this marvelous gathering of disparate and strikingly humorous figurative forms seems to be spinning around in the artist's head, ready to be borrowed for her compositions as she intuitively lays out a parade of semi-alien creatures from the cartoon universe in the sky.

Donaty's new series effortlessly connects with her past work by retaining the delightful common denominator of slapstick humor in unlikely possibilities, including a never-ending barrage of characters born of impossible imagination and circumstances. It doesn't hurt that this gifted artist has a special knack for inventing oddball scenarios that are heightened by superior picture-making.

The work titled **All Stars** (pg. 55) is a pretty good example of a painter gone wild with an unlimited imagination and an unusual talent for making things up that appear believable. A careful examination of *All Stars* first and foremost reveals an uncommon talent for generating realistic perspectives. The purple-shoed skateboarder mysteriously glides through the air while miniature UFOs jump to get out of the way. Those curious creatures that don't react fast enough, express comic horror as they nearly become absorbed by the airborne velocity that's jetting through the atmosphere. Also in this engaging configuration, there is an unusual viewpoint that looks upward, adding convincing depth and is secured by a complicated foreground of beings never before discovered.

While many painters limit themselves to two-dimensional formulas, Donaty takes in stride three-dimensional forms that are accented by connective characteristics that simply don't skip a beat. **Freaky** (pg. 16,17), depicts a five-eyed, big-lipped, blob of a shape, which is perhaps looking for a friendly expression from a sympathetic observer. The creature's skin is translucent, revealing a network of colorful "veins" that could only come from another planet. Conversely, **Top Dog** (pg. 29), has the same identifiable DNA as other delightful figures that add to the pageant of engaging suspects.

In all of Donaty's carefully articulated works, her audience can sense a true love of articulating paint medium combined with a love and fascination for creating abstracted characters that are unique and certainly memorable. These works suggest a rare talent and an artist who truly is having a wonderful time that ends each day, no doubt, with an engaging smile of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Bruce Helander is an art critic, arts writer, curator and artist. He is the former Editor-in-Chief of 'The Art Economist' magazine, White House Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Former Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs of the RISD. He is a regular contributor to *The New Yorker* and *The Huffington Post*.



The Struggle to Play Set Free

by Frank Hyder

In 1987 I was working as a teacher of Painting and serving as Department Chairman of Fine Arts Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia. During this time I first became acquainted with Dana. She was memorable, as a student a bit of a bomb thrower. She worked well in class but was one to push a project to its limits. She had an internal sense of how far one could go to get a good product but always gave an extra push to explore new territory. She had the respect of other students and clearly was a leader, one to whom others looked for direction.

She was a prodigious worker and took pride in challenging faculty. I remember clearly being asked by faculty to speak with her about being more focused on the class than on her own personal agenda. This was precisely what I liked about her, her unique sense of direction. Even then she presented a vision of an artist determined to break any barrier that rose in her path. It was not the finish of her work that impressed me so much as the force of her work.

After graduation I lost track of her until ten years ago I found myself exhibiting in Art Palm Beach. Dana, a Florida resident was creating commissioned paintings and finishes in high-end Palm Beach homes, but looking to expand her studio practice. I was glad to see that she was using her talents and had found a way to make a living to boot. About three years ago she came to me seeking advice. We talked a while and I gave her my insight, doubting she would heed my advice as people frequently say they want to make a go for something but rarely are willing to do the hard work that “going for it” requires. Six months passed and Dana asked me to see what she was doing. First I was impressed and delighted to see that she had made a deeper commitment to her art and had also been juried into an artist residency at Bakehouse Art Complex in Miami.

I realized immediately she was cultivating a fresh approach to her work, incorporating her highly developed painting skills with a random chance element. A bold energy sizzled thru these new works. Accidents gave birth to carefully realized imaginary apparitions. The work revealed a clue into how playful and dazzling her mind is and each new piece seemed to gain from the last as she crossed artistic territory breaking down new doors and entering uncharted zones. She leapt into the third dimension because the work insisted and then returned to the painted space creating direct connections with Baroque and Rococo masters, not even previously knowing them.

Dana is a well-trained skillful craftsman with a risk takers soul. She is fearless of failure searching not for success but rather completion of Self. Her palette sings with the full-throated sound of the tropics, her images dance and jump as leprechauns working feverishly on some devilish plan of mayhem. Her thirst for new injections of techniques and products puts her right in step with today's finest young mixed media masters.

The arc of Dana Donaty is vibrant, like a freshly released lighted arrow sent skyward by an archer of old into a dark summer sky, lighting everything it passes with its ember and beacons others to follow as it clearly lights our way.

Now for me it is a pleasure to get together with Dana as we share enthusiastically ideas about new materials. We are no longer the teacher and student, but two artists searchers straining to see a bit further. It is a pleasure to see how time spent over the years was well spent with Dana who I stand beside and admire for her tenacity, perseverance, and elegant determination to seek her own voice and join a majestic chorus while others imitate and posture. Dana's voice strains to find that perfect note, reserved only for originals to attain.

Frank Hyder *is an artist, former Painting Professor and Department Chair at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia*



Whalby
fiberglass & mixed media
35 x 18 x 14 inches, 2016
creature from Harlequins Carnival painting
left

Harlequin's Carnival
acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 inches, 2016
right



America's Got Talent
acrylic on canvas, fiberglass, fabric, chair and mixed media
dimensions variable, 2016
Bakehouse Art Complex, Miami, FL

America's Got Talent
acrylic on canvas
110 x 68 inches, 2016
detail next page











Freaky
fiberglass, acrylic and mixed media
19 x 17 x 14 inches, 2016

Freaky
detail
left





MaryJane's Jungle
acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 inches, 2014
left

Blue Moon
acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches, 2014
right





Psychedelic Rodeo
acrylic on canvas, fiberglass, resin, hand-painted
handkerchief, hand-sewn denim and mixed media
110 x 60 x 11 inches, 2015
left

Psychedelic Rodeo
detail



Rhinacorn, Coming to a Theatre Near You Soon
acrylic on canvas, fiberglass, resin and mixed media
110 X 54 X 22 inches, 2015
right

Rhinacorn, Coming to a Theatre Near You Soon
detail







Electric Bullfight
acrylic on board
diptych, 60 x 60 inches 2014
left

Matador Mash Beach
acrylic on canvas
30 x 60 inches, 2014
right

Olé
acrylic on canvas
46 x 56 inches, 2014

Green Back
acrylic on canvas
diptych, 30 x 60 inches, 2014
next page









Glurpee
fiberglass and mixed media
31 x 20 x 15 inches, 2015
creature from Top Dog painting

Top Dog
acrylic on canvas
48 x 60 inches, 2015
right





Captain MoneyPants
fiberglass, canvas, glass and mixed media
43 x 28 x 24 inches, 2016
creature from Top Dog painting



Jumpin Jack Flash
acrylic on canvas
48 x 90 inches, 2015







One Giant Leap
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2014

Twinkle Toes
acrylic on canvas
46 x 56 inches, 2014
right





The Barber of Seville
acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches, 2014
left

One Pill Makes You Larger
acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 inches, 2014
right





Maestro's Magic Minstrels
acrylic on canvas
40 x 80 inches, 2016



Blue Monkey Flamenco
acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 inches, 2014





Lilly Pulitzer's Prize
acrylic on canvas
48 x 78 inches, 2017
left

Lilly Pulitzer's Prize
detail
right





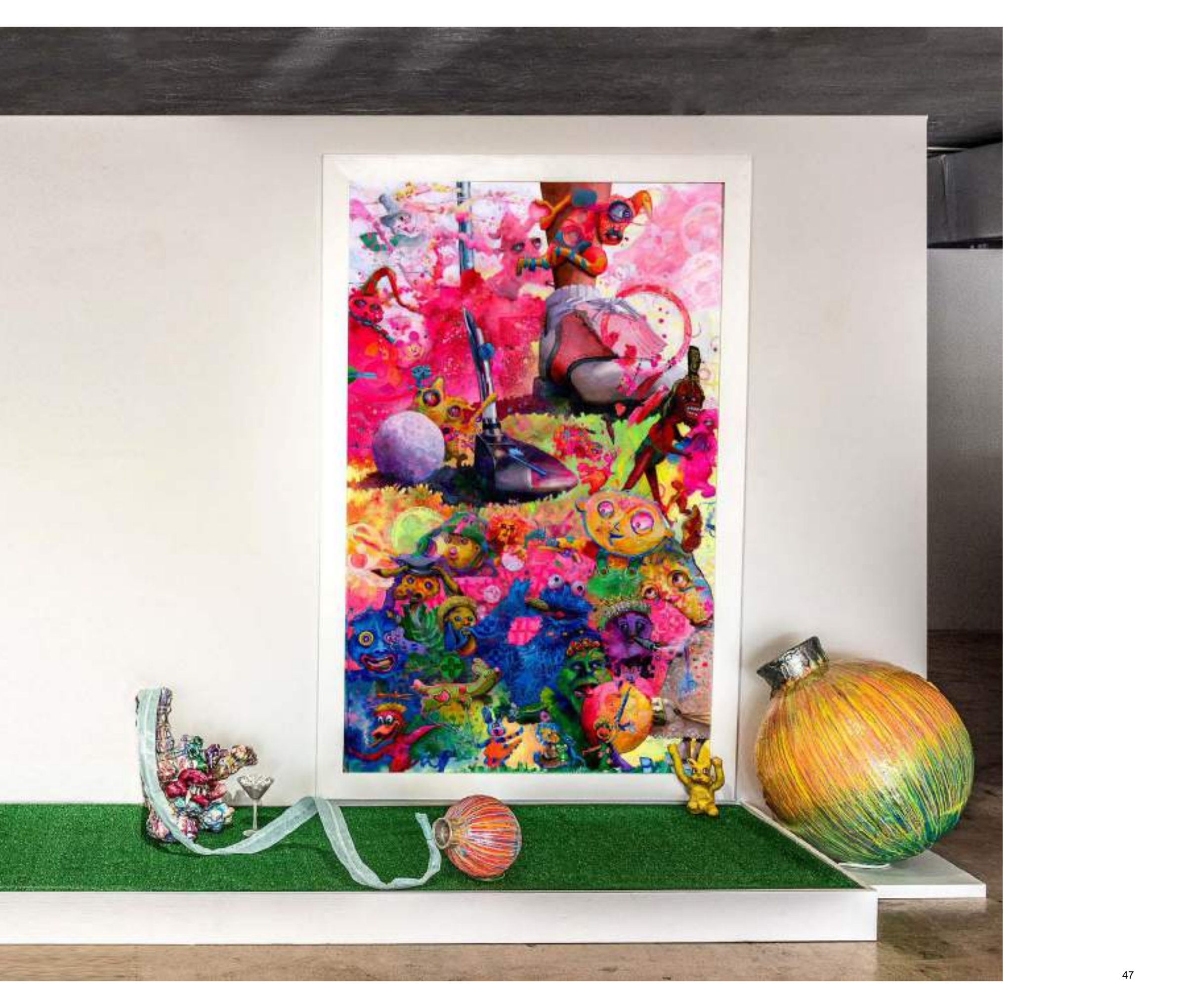
Art of the Spiel
acrylic on canvas
48 x 78 inches, 2017
left

Art of the Spiel
detail
right





Hole in One
acrylic on canvas, astro turf, fiberglass,
fabric, martini glass and mixed media
dimensions variable, 2017
The Box Gallery, Palm Beach, FL



Saturday Night Live
acrylic on canvas
40 x 80 inches, 2015







Saturday Night Live
acrylic on canvas, fiberglass and mixed media
dimensions variable, 2016
The Box Gallery, Palm Beach, FL

Marcel
fiberglass, resin and mixed media
20 x 20 x 29 inches, 2016
right

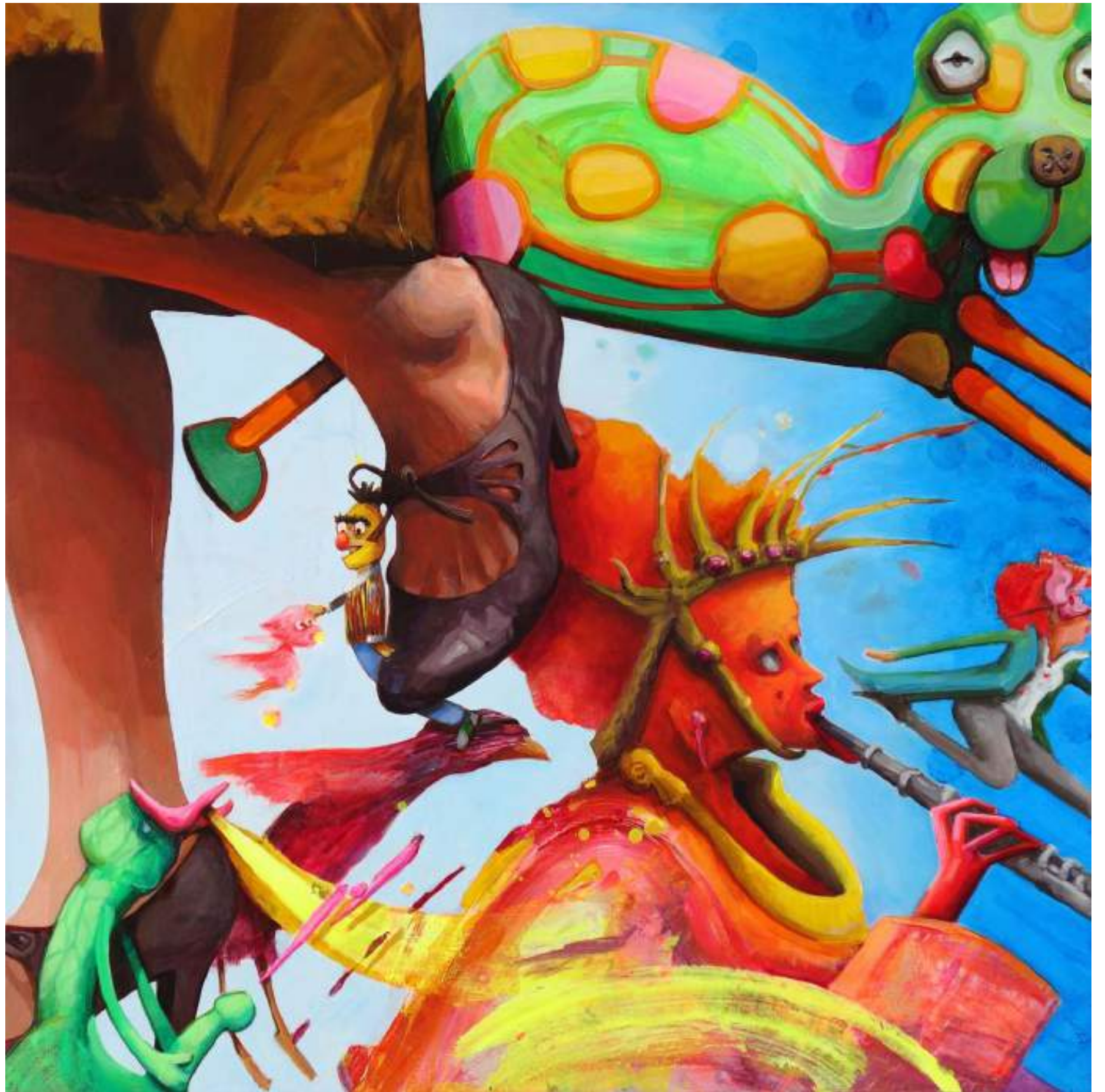






Flaming Billy
acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 inches, 2014
left

Peep Show
acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 inches, 2014
right



*I've narrowed it down
The cacophony of my work
satire
playfulness
larceny
excess
audacious color
fragments of humans
responses to things happening in the world
politics & culture
primal
psychologically slanted
culture jam (environmental psychology)
expressive of individual freedom
a cast of characters*

YES

All Stars
acrylic on canvas
48 x 60 inches, 2014



Lord of the Rings
acrylic on linen
48 x 60 inches, 2014



Out of This World Cup
acrylic on canvas
30 x 60 inches, 2014



sdsds
The Real Thing
acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches, 2014







Tickled Pink
acrylic on board and hand-painted toy
14 x 18 inches, 2015
left

Champagne Dreams
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2016
right

*it is being constructed as I go along
chance is the organizing principal
improvised
its a perfect logic
and yet i want to deny the logic of my work
just as the mind doesn't control how
information arrives, my process does
not entirely control its output I bring life under control*

After Party
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2015





Hare Style
acrylic on canvas
14 x 18 inches, 2015

It's a Wonderful Life
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2015



Bombay Sapphire
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2015



The Economics of Desire
acrylic on canvas
diptych, 64 x 106 inches, 2017

The Economics of Desire
detail next page



Delusional:



Search for the Next Great Artist

WE VALIDATE



Helvetica
GAGA GOLD
Regular

codes of
consumption

the curious
economics
of desire

crucial

PARAGRAPH

10 px

0 px

0 px

Helvetica

TRIBE BLVD

EXON

EXON

EXON

EXON

EXON

EXON

EXON

EXON



Steppin Out
acrylic on board and hand-painted toy
12 x 12 inches, 2015
left

Steppin Out
detail



Extra Dirty
acrylic on board and hand-painted toy
12 x 12 inches, 2015
right

Extra Dirty
detail



Must Not Kill Donna
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2016
right



Lunar Landing
acrylic on canvas
46 x 56 inches, 2014



#InstagramQueenandtheSmokinMonkey
acrylic on canvas
24 x 36 inches, 2014
left

Feet Wave
acrylic on canvas
diptych, 72 x 48 inches, 2014
right



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14 - 15	America's Got Talent <i>detail</i> acrylic on canvas 110 x 68 inches, 2016	30 - 31	Captain MoneyPants fiberglass, canvas, glass and mixed media 43 x 28 x 24 inches, 2016 <i>creature from Top Dog painting</i>
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18	MaryJane's Jungle acrylic on canvas 30 x 30 inches, 2014	34	One Giant Leap acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 inches, 2014
19	Blue Moon acrylic on canvas 24 x 24 inches, 2014	35	Twinkle Toes acrylic on canvas 46 x 56 inches, 2014
20	Psychedelic Rodeo acrylic on canvas, fiberglass, resin, hand-painted handkerchief, hand-sewn denim and mixed media 110 x 60 x 11 inches, 2015	36	The Barber of Seville acrylic on canvas 24 x 24 inches, 2014
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52	Flaming Billy acrylic on canvas 30 x 30 inches, 2014	71	The Economics of Desire acrylic on canvas diptych, 64 x 106 inches, 2017
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57	Lord of the Rings acrylic on linen 48 x 60 inches, 2014	75	Extra Dirty acrylic on board and hand-painted dinosaur 12 x 12 inches, 2015
59	Out of this World Cup acrylic on canvas 30 x 60 inches, 2014		

77 **Must Not Kill Donna**
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches, 2015

79 **Lunar Landing**
acrylic on canvas
46 x 56 inches, 2014

80 **#InstagramQueenandtheSmokinMonkey**
acrylic on canvas
24 x 36 inches, 2014

81 **Feet Wave**
acrylic on canvas
diptych, 72 x 48 inches, 2014



My work comes from an interest in satirical playfulness, fragments of timeless memory where nothing is sacred. Thinking about the process of how things come into being, how this art is formed, conceived and recognized.

Every part of my art-making is a series of actions and reactions. I place virgin canvas underneath the “in-process” painting on my easel. Intentionally, I am ‘collecting’ the excess paint that is flung, splattered, scraped, spilled and off loaded. Just like the canvas before it, the floor work is then raised to eye level. From the aggregation of Rorschach-like blots of primordial color, a fresh and daring composition and a new group of figurative characters emerge. Their shape serves as stimulus for free association – in fact, almost any irregular free shape can spark off the associative process. This is a central part of my creative process – an intrinsic aspect that my work can't exist without. Giving life to a cast of characters; each exhibiting the vitality of their individual freedom, each one leading to another – until they exhaust their possibilities – and create, conceptually, a visual display of memories sourced from the subconscious.

In addition to this auto-associative memory process, I often assimilate ideas or phrases from things people say or from books on audio that I hear, or overhear, while I am working. My process mirrors the way in which we learn, we cannot ultimately control how information finds us or how we process it. Therefore, I regard chance as the organizing principle employed in constructing each painting.

In response to the chance convergence of memories, thoughts, sounds, emotions, and other stimuli, I attempt to control the uncontrollable through a narrative, layered with numerous subplots, that is personal, implied and universal. My work is my poetic theater of uncertainty, popular culture, universal truths, personal experiences and modern condition. The viewer can partake in a stable set of meanings or challenge the imagery with their own sense of wonder.

Dana Donaty



*And above all,
watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you
because the greatest secrets are always hidden
in the most unlikely places.
Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.*

Roald Dahl, *The Minpins*, 1990

























Dana Donaty was raised in New Jersey, coming with a unique blend of Colombian, Peruvian, Italian, Irish and American backgrounds. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing from Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia, PA. After living in London, England for twelve years she relocated in 2006 to Florida, where she now lives and works.

Widely recognized for her provocative canvases with unusual narrative, Donaty's unmistakable satirical lexicon is a perfect collision of reality and fantasy, outlandish burlesque, psychological flirtation and a super charged palette that is like a party about to get thoroughly out of control.

She has completed many award winning public art projects, featured in over 50 national and international publications. She has garnered multiple awards within the design industry, as she has been sought after to create unique commissions for high profile residential and commercial projects.

Her work has been exhibited at The Cornell Museum of Art, as well as international art fairs like Art Palm Beach, Art Boca Raton, the American International Fine Art Fair, Scope and major group shows throughout Florida. Selected solo shows include 'Reality Check' sponsored by South Florida Ford, Paul Fisher Gallery in Palm Beach, and The Ora Sorensen Gallery in Palm Beach. Her work is in both public and private collections in the US, and Europe.

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for Esthercita,
As far as possible, without surrender.....
1928 - 2012



2017

