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# upfront



PARENTAL  
**ADVISORY**  
EXPLICIT CONTENT

# THE UGLY ISSUE

# ART NOTES

By: Morgan Cook



On June 29th Darren Grainger's new work will debut at La Galerie Petite Mort.



Meaghan Haughian's work will be on display there as well for the month of June. The show, entitled "The Lois Diaries: Fragments of a Life Unknown" will be a collection of drawings and collages. Meaghan Haughian's work will also be appearing as part of The Magnificent Seven along with Amber Albrecht, Sarah Hallman, Katie Dutton, Erin Robertson, Andrea Stokes and Amy Thompson at **Patrick Gordon Framing**. The show will run until the August long weekend, the reception will be held Tuesday June 22nd from 7-11 pm.



Chantal Bennett and Joel Kimmel two talented young illustrative artists are showing their work at **Oz Cafe** to help raise funds for the move to N.Y. Stop by there until June 9th to show your support.



**Artguise** will be featuring the work of Hayden Menzies until the 20th of June and Jeff Maus' art will be on display until the middle of the month at **Chez Lucien**.

well organized and at his disposal. Multiple work surfaces, good lighting and most importantly the evidence of work, create an environment conducive to creativity. The area is primarily white with faint pink handprints and smears over almost every surface. For the most part, he works in series and several of these are organized around the space. The work is shocking. The backgrounds are flat, the colours are bright, and the images are graphic. Grainger has drawn heavily on pornography in the formation of his acrylic, image and glass work. Two similar pieces show an image repeated in triplicate. One shows a woman with open mouth, ejaculate on her face and a black bar over her eyes. The second shows the same woman with a satisfied smile. Mounted on the wall are several miniatures of a woman's body from the waist down, legs spread over a blood-red splattered background with a gash of black paint across her crotch. Underneath these are several medium-large reproductions of cherries over completely matte black background behind glass, in a heavy black frame.

The last show at GLPM was held in September of 2006. Entitled "One Night Stand with Darren Grainger: An Exploration of Anxiety and Promiscuity," it included 25 pieces that dealt with the issue of what turns us on sexually turning us off morally. The artist gave away 500 black condoms in clear wrappers printed with "One Night Stand with Darren Grainger" and a lipstick kiss. The ultimate in self-promotion à la guerrilla marketing. The show drew on Grainger's experience as one of many boys who grew up in the 80's and learned about sex from porn. He is quick to state that he isn't opposed to pornography, which he considers "inevitable recreation," but states that it is a "bizarre misrepresentation of real life".

With no professional train-



ing he is, in his own words, "not corrupted". He acknowledges the values of academic training, such as the discipline it takes to work in a structured time frame, but he doubts that time management can stimulate the inner desire to create. Grainger has the desire, the passion and the vision it takes to be an artist. His ideas are big. His past includes a debauchorous rock and roll lifestyle, which assists him in

conceiving and creating great ambitious projects. He aspires to a Warholesque pinnacle of stardom. Although he claims that he would enjoy simply having a nice car to drive around town, it's the freedom that such celebrity brings that draws Grainger. His ideas are expensive, cumbersome and unconventional. His eyes gleam at the mention of a future that would enable him to create the art he envisions with-

out thought of cost, transportation or a potential market. Past undertakings have gained him a considerable amount of notoriety. At the 2005 Spring Party, Social, a popular restaurant and lounge in the Byward Market, unveiled his infamous "Kids with Hose," also known as the painting with the million dollar price tag. Measuring eight feet by six feet and weighing 400 pounds, the acrylic on glass piece was a mammoth undertaking that involved huge investments of time and money, custom cut glass and frame, a 5 tonne truck to move it, scaffolding and a dozen people to hang it.

Grainger cracks jokes about his own insincerity, but they are just that...jokes. His work is strong, personal, passionate and shocking. He is comfortable saying that a lot of his work is intended as a big "fuck you," although to whom it's directed is left open to interpretation. The son of an ex-cop and ex-CSIS father, he is open about the loss of his mother in a car accident on his tenth birthday and the event's consequential effect on the development of his personality and, ultimately, his art. He confidently discusses the ensuing Compulsive Obsessive Disorder, his treatment and his triumphs over the disease. Just as the loss has become integral to who he is as a person, so has it become inextricably linked to his work.

His being is driven and compelled to create art that makes people reassess themselves and their ideas. Even those who would consider themselves open-minded individuals with a healthy grasp of sexuality cannot help but be shocked by some of his work. Grainger strives to be "continually experimenting". He says that he goes through extended down times where he creates next to nothing. But these are easily followed by a 3 am call to arms. **up**



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DARREN GRAINGER TALKS CANDIDLY AND EFFORTLESSLY ABOUT HIS ARTWORK, AND ALMOST EVERY TABOO SUBJECT, WHILST DOORWAY-LOUNGING IN A RED SHIRT EMBLAZONED WITH THE WORDS "KILL LINCOLN". THE CHARMING 32 YEAR OLD, WHOSE WORK IS KNOWN FOR ITS SHOCKING CONTENT, WILL BE EXHIBITING AT GALERIE LA PETITE MORT ON FRIDAY JUNE 29TH.

By: Morgan Cook

This will not be his first show at GLPM but it will be a departure from the work he's known for; rather than working with acrylic, glass and reproduced images, he will be making his first foray into oils. Grainger wants to maintain a strong pop mixed-media look, even though the work will be more traditional, figurative and created mostly with "my hand" as he puts it. Used to the immediacy of other mediums, the slow drying time of oils means that Grainger will have to modify his working methods.

It's a challenge he faces with a cocky and confident grin. Darren has been making art for a long time and states that even as a child he "did a fair bit" and "was always liked by art teachers". He sums it up by saying, "My rocket maybe didn't look as good as Johnny's rocket but it had a little more passion to it." He has creat-

ed regularly since the age of 20 and although, or maybe because, process is so important to him, he hasn't picked one in particular. As his current foray into a new medium illustrates, each show has its own process.

The shock-intellectual pop-artist is fortunate and driven enough to have an aesthetically

pleasing apartment-house/studio in the new Dalhousie DYI fashion district at his disposal. A recent piece of his, which uses ejaculate as a medium, was housed at GLPM for less than two days before being sold at auction to a business owner from this same district. Grainger has considered opening his studio up to

the public. He comments that "Darren Grainger: Slaughterhouse" is both the best and worst name he has come up with so far. The studio itself is sparse, organized and thrilling. Once used to teach piano, the workspace is one with appeals. His tools, including industrial sprayers and raw pigment, are