

Abra-Zine!

Summer 2014
MERMAIDS

Issue No. 4
Featuring Art
by Oli Rooze

Nicole Lee:
Finding
Your
"Happy"

IN TRAVEL:
LEGENDARY
ADVENTURES
AT SEA!

BREAKING
THE
MER-MOLD:
Body Image
with
Karina
Beraldo

Neptune:
The God of
the Sea
with Astrologer
Renee Francis

GET YOUR FREE
NATAL CHART!

PLUS:
RECIPES,
MORE ART,
CRAFTS,
MUSIC,
POETRY,
SUMMER TIPS,
& MORE!!

REAL LIFE
MERMAIDS:
Ariel Undine
Lily-Rose Sheppard

Mermaid
Meditation
with
Michelle Ciccio



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**FIND OUT THE THEME FOR
OUR NEXT ISSUE!
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Credits



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on Facebook

ON THE COVER

Editor in Chief

Justina Carubia
(Graphic Designer & Columnist)

Writer

Articles: 4,18,44,46,47-55,57,58,59
Interviews: 16,17,19,38-39,40-41,45,56
Captions: 8,9,63,64,68
Poetry: 31

ARTISTS & CONTRIBUTORS

Ariel Ryberg, Poet (Pgs.28,29)
Aerika Lewis, Poet (Pg.30)
Ariel Undine, Musician Interview (Pgs.38,39)
Beatrice Bennett, Artist (Pg.24)
Belinda S., Artist (Pg.62)
Beth Marie Aucoin, Artist (Pgs.7,9,25)
Chris Villanueva, Artist (Pg.31)
Daniel Fernandez, Artist (Pgs.20,21)
Darius Conway, Columnist (Pg.11)
Deidre Gubbels, Artist Interview (Pgs.40,41)
Dena Miller, Home/Garden Columnist (Pgs.42,43)
Gordon Napier, Artist (Pgs.6,30,43,64,69)
Jeffrey Vore, Poet (Pg.27)
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Luis Haseo, Artist (Pg.60)
Megan Nicole Dong, Comic Artist (Pg.63)
Michelle Ciccio, Mind/Body Columnist (Pg.13)
Nicole Lee, Mind/Body Columnist (Pg.12)
Oli Rooze, Artist (Art on Cover & Pgs.3,12,18,28,29,64,70)
Pixie Cold, Artist (Pgs.26,27)
Rebecca Sinz, Artist (Pgs.31,32,33,64)
Renee Conway, Astrologer, Columnist, Graphics (Pgs.36,37,60,61,63)
Roy Carubia, Artist (Pg.61)
Ryan Wilson, Poet/Artist (Pg.35)
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Watercolor Background Stock

Aurora Wienhold (Cover, Pgs.3,6,7,9,15,24,25,31,
34,35,43,60,64,65,70)

Shembre Stock (Pg.16)

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Australian Sea Dragon Pg.58 (Stock Images)
Underwater Fish, Pg.59 (www.WallSave.com)
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“Diadem of Tears” by Oli Rooze (Russia)

More on Page 18!
[See Portfolio HERE!](#)

Photographers

Ashley Allocco, Pg.4
Jonathan Kertis, Pg.31
Olivia Minton, Pgs.38,39
Avinash Patel Pgs.47-55
Justina Carubia, Pgs.14,47-55,66
Lisa Sheppard, Pg.56
Tom Sweek, Pg.57
Daniel Taylor, Pg.57

ON THIS PAGE:

Background:
Teresa Young
Aurora Wienhold Stock
Nautical Redhead Mermaid: Beth Aucoin

“Abra-zine!”’s mission is to showcase and promote the amazing artistic talent and inspiration from all over the globe! We find all of our contributors through word of mouth, personal connections, or through surfing Google Images, Facebook, or our personal favorite, DEVIANT ART! At anytime, throughout the issue, when you see the following interactive symbols, you may click on them to take you to a contributor’s personal pages. Please refer to the key below for proper identification of each button!

From L to R:

Tumblr, Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, DeviantArt,
Blogger, Instagram, Soundcloud, Youtube.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Read about my travel
adventures on page 47!

Hello Lovelies!!

And welcome to my very anticipated MERMAID Edition of "Abra-zine!" I am so excited to have finally put all of this material together for all of you! Ever since I was a little girl, I felt such a connection to these mysterious and wondrous mythological creatures. What was it about them? Maybe the half human, half creature aspect of these beings appealed to the Sagittarian in me. Or maybe it's the beautiful voices from which these sirens call to curious sailors. Ariel was my idol as a child, and she could have very well sparked my need to be a vocalist. My grandmother would babysit me around 5 or 6 years old, and all I would do was watch The Little Mermaid...on repeat. My poor grandmother!! But in all seriousness, Ariel yearned for the unattainable, as did I, and still do. I think everyone can relate to her in one way or another. She yearns to step outside of her comfort zone, and find a better life for herself. She's literally just a big fish in a small pond. Her story can be extremely inspiring to artists all across the board! It is not only inspiring, but also serves as a warning to also be careful what you wish for, and proceed on your journey with caution.

Finding your calling in life does not come without some roadblocks and even a villain or two. There will be malicious people who will be out to get you, but Ariel never let that stop her. She rose above the proverbial wave and eventually came out on top. She got her voice back, her man, and even found the life that was ideal to her. Was it a perfect life? Disney would like us to think so, but who knows what happened after the credits stopped rolling. Personally to me, ideal doesn't necessarily mean "perfect". There are going to be disagreements, hardships, etc. I'm just trying to be real here, but let's not get too off topic.

Whether it's the whimsical Disney version, or the darker Hans Christian Andersen version, there has always been something so intriguing and inspiring that we mundane humans could take away from it. In this issue, I have compiled many stories and works of art by my fellow mermaids, and mermaid lovers from around the world. What does being a mermaid mean to you? To me it is all of these things I have touched on in this Editor's Note. It is not being afraid to go after your dreams, seeking out YOUR ideal, freeing yourself. If you are that big fish in a little pond, just keep swimming until you are finally able to stand! Mermaids are mythological and inspiring creatures that have sparked the imaginations of many artists and storytellers for centuries. I hope I can inspire every one of you with these stories!

Before I close, I just want to take a brief moment to acknowledge one of the most inspiring mermaids I know, Wild Sisterhood Editor in Chief & CEO Jenn Saunders. She has just opened up about her life with Asperger's Syndrome, which is a form of Autism. You can read about her journey of self discovery on her blog [HERE](#)! It was such an incredibly brave thing for her to do, and I admire that she is constantly putting herself out there and being honest with not only the world, but herself. I'd also like to give her such wonderful thanks for acknowledging my work as well; The Wild Sisterhood had reached out to me a few months ago, to be their WILD SISTER OF THE MONTH FOR JULY! I couldn't be more honored and proud to represent such likeminded strong women, my fellow mermaids.

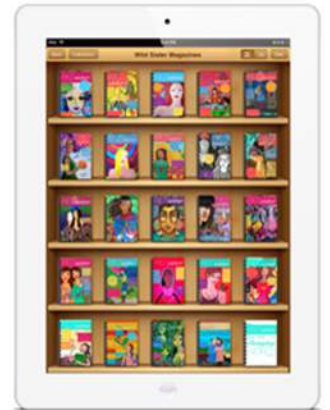
Thank You and Enjoy This Mermaid Issue of ABRA-ZINE!

Justina Carabba

Me, sporting
my Ariel Red
hair!



Photo by Ashley Allocco



The Wild Sisterhood is a social network and E-magazine for wild women + world-changers to connect, find infinite inspiration + design their lives.

**CLICK NOW TO START
YOUR JOURNEY!**



Artwork:
"Mermaid of Atlantis"
by Gordon Napier

sea of green

by kerry marley

we waded through
a sea of green,
broken up by
only pale white,
painted lines.

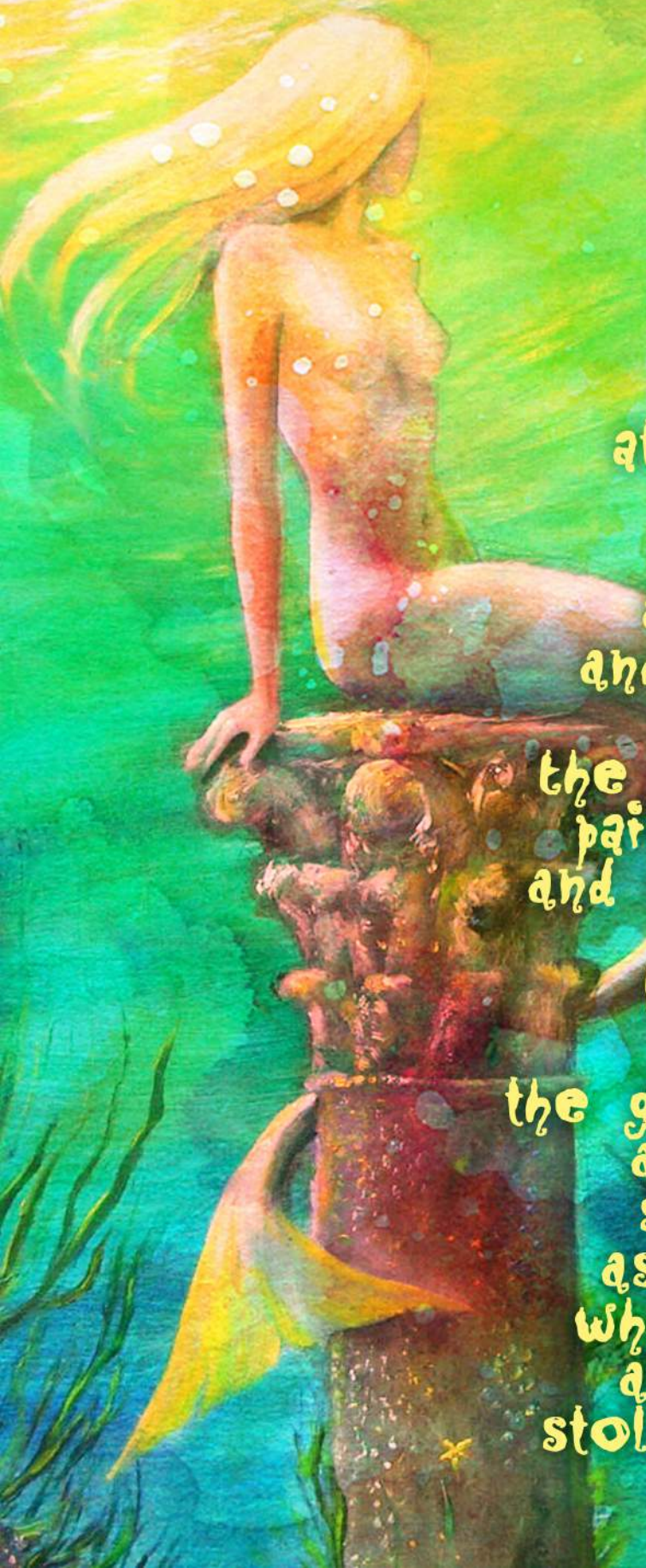
we stared up
at the cotton clouds,
with our backs
in the grass

against the ground,
and wished there were
stars in the air.

the sun, low in the skies,
painted us golden-topaz.
and smiles lit up our eyes
as we passed

laughter all around.

we watched as
the glowing moon woke up,
and the stars traded
shifts with the day;
as the lights came on
when the darkness fell,
and the beauty of it
stole all our words away.





I MUST BE A
MERMAID...

I HAVE NO FEAR
OF DEPTHS
E A GREAT
FEAR OF

SHALLOW LIVING

-Anais Nin

Book Review

By Kimberly Arend Porter



Carolyn Turgeon's "Mermaid" is not your typical tale about the mythical mermaid. You would expect the usual Walt Disney kind of version, but what you will take away from this book is far from it. This rendition follows Hans Christian Anderson's tale more closely, but the twist in this story makes it stand out in a more unique way that would appeal more to the adult demographic.

There are some things I did love about the book; the details of the water, the kingdoms, and how she explained the sea, really bring you there visually. The fine details of the mermaids and the highly detailed imagery of what Lenia (the mermaid) looked like, were a treat for my imagination. However, I did not need to be constantly reminded that her breasts were bare. The book did inspire my mind to wander, and I suddenly felt the desire to go scuba diving in an abyss. I wish that the author had given her characters more clever-sounding kingdom names rather than the boring ones she supplied them with. There were some characters that I feel, she did not develop as much, who were a whole lot more intriguing than the main characters. I would have enjoyed seeing more of them. Even the sea witch, I felt, lacked in depth of detail and character. Overall, I felt that the words flowed nicely and were pleasant to read.

I truly think that this book would have been fantastic if it weren't for the very abrupt and not so desirable ending. I felt it was put together sloppily without much thought. She goes through such trouble to adorn the almost promising book with beautiful detail throughout, only to build up to a very regretful and unsatisfying ending. It is pretty hard to explain or elaborate without spoiling. Definitely "dive" into this book if you are into reading timeless tales with a bit of a twist, but keep in mind the rigid and possibly disappointing ending. I give it a 3 out of 5 stars!



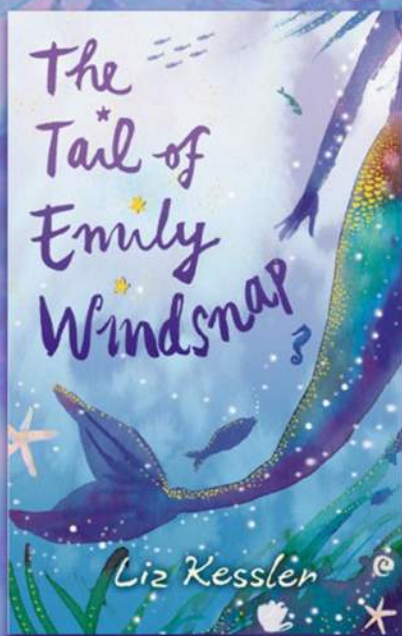
CLICK TO BUY
ON AMAZON!

mermaid books for little ones!

The Tail of Emily Windsnap
By Liz Kessler
Best for Grades 4-7

This 5 book series surrounds a 12 year old girl who lives with her mother on a boat by the sea. One day she takes a swimming lesson and discovers something very strange about herself! This marks the start of her magical journey through the mythological world of mermaids, where she finds out the truth about her family and the strange lighthouse keeper, Mr. Beeston. New York Times Best Seller!

BUY NOW ON AMAZON!



Mermaid Beauty

Products to Try This Summer

Organix has a new line of hair products, designed to give you the perfect beachy mermaid hair this summer! Find any of these products at your local pharmacy or AMAZON.COM!

Organix's new line includes Shampoo, Conditioner, Moisture Surge, Shimmering Replenisher, Sea Salt Spray, & Surf Paste, which contain Deep Sea Minerals, Green Algae, & Sea Kelp. (Protects against UV & heat damage and moisturizes! Safe for color treated hair!

Moroccan Sea Salt Spray- Weightless surfer mist, contains texturizing sea salt, kelp, and Argan oil to add shine and enhance those beachy waves!

Try Sally Hansen Nail Polishes in sea shades of "Mermaid's Tail" & "Black & Blue"

Creates radical, unstructured, surf style, with moisturizing **argan oil of Morocco** and **sea kelp** to condition strands while **sea salt** adds separation, texture and control with a matte finish for a super-cool, beach vibe style.

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moroccan
sea salt
spray

Sally Hansen
complete
SALON
MANICURE

sea mineral
Moisture

MOISTURE
SURGE

Moisture replenisher
for weak, dry,
damaged,
over processed, or
chemically treated
hair.

Organix

385 ml e 13.0 fl.oz.

quenched.
sea mineral
Moisture

SHAMPOO

Quench dry, damaged hair with this nutrient rich blend of hydrating sea minerals along with healing algae to wrap split ends in repairing moisture, while supercharged sea kelp transforms dry, brittle hair into soft supple perfection.

Organix

385 ml e 13.0 fl.oz.

quenched.
sea mineral
Moisture

CONDITIONER

Quench dry, damaged hair with this nutrient rich blend of hydrating sea minerals along with healing algae to wrap split ends in repairing moisture, while supercharged sea kelp transforms dry, brittle hair into soft supple perfection.

Organix

385 ml e 13.0 fl.oz.



Artwork:
"Icy Mermaid"
By Beth Aucoin
(Idaho, USA)

MERMAID MADNESS!

EDITOR'S PICKS

Here are some cool finds to get you in the Mer-mood!

Mer-Music

Spotify

During the creating of this issue, I listened to a lot of magical and calming Mermaid Music on Spotify! Click on an album to listen on Spotify! Here are some of my favorites!



"111 Relaxing Piano Music, Meditation, Study, Baby, Yoga..."
By Ocean



"Spirit of the Mermaids"
By Mo Coilson & Chris Conway

MER-MOVIES TO WATCH!

Splash!

Hook

Online

Lady in the Water

Peter Pan (2003)

Aquamarine

The Little Mermaid

Mermaids (Cher & Winona Ryder)

Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides



TV Series



The Complete Series

12

A group of girls get stranded on an island and have to swim through to a pool under a dormant volcano to get to safety. They are rescued shortly after, but once they are home, things are never quite the same! Catch this Australian series on

NETFLIX

ABOUT MERPEOPLE COMICS BY MEGAN NICOLE DONG



tumblr.

WATCH MY FAVORITE MERMAID VIDEOS ON MY YOUTUBE PLAYLIST!



CLICK HERE!





Art:
"Longing"

By Lorena Lammer
(Trier, Germany)

THE TRAILS OF "THE LITTLE MERMAID"

BY DARIUS CONWAY

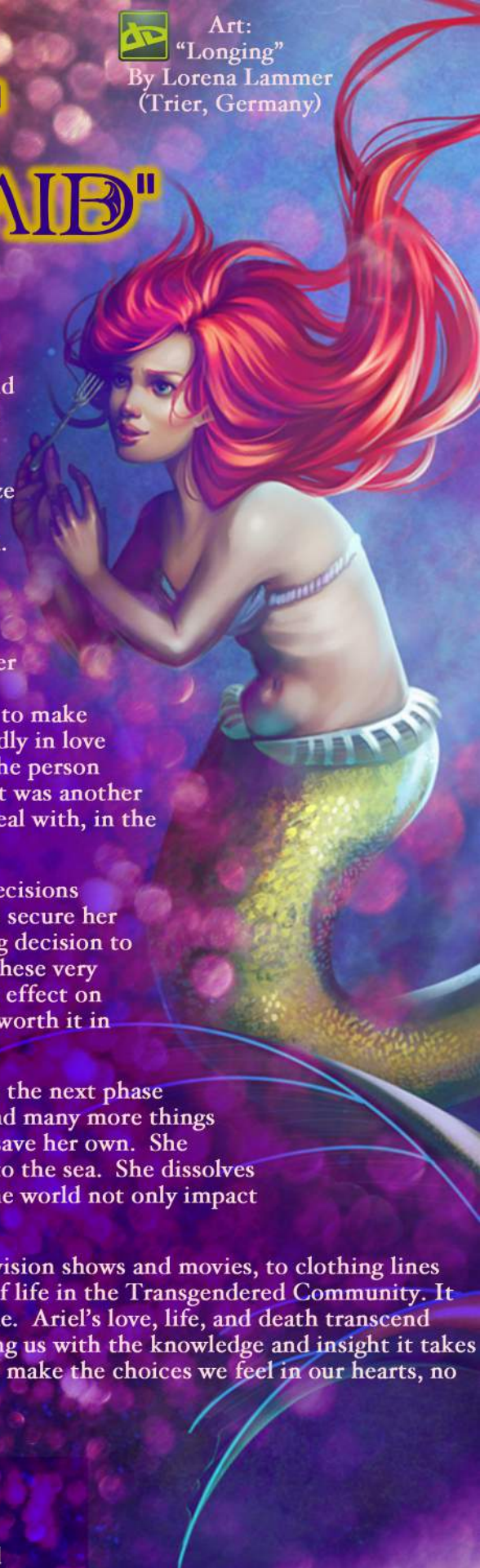
Throughout history, the story of "The Little Mermaid" has been told all over the world. It's a story that was originally written in the 18th century by Hans Christian Andersen, about a young mermaid ready to give up her life and her identity with the sea to be with a human prince. One day, she saves him from drowning while he was sailing his boat, but he knew nothing about her. She then becomes a human girl in exchange for her voice, after accepting a magical proposition from a villainous sea witch. She is then able to mesmerize the prince with her stunning beauty, even though she is mute. Throughout the story she continuously transforms through love, life, and ultimately death.

So how do we transform through our own ultimate ending through love, life, and death? Many people change when they become one with another. Whether it is that friendship, family, or partnership of love, we transform through the good and the bad. We have to learn to deal with that of the other half and accept some things through the whole process of love. We won't necessarily always have the best of love from that other half, but we must try to make it work as much as we possibly can. Ariel, the mermaid in the tale, was so madly in love with the prince, but he was not madly in love with her. He fell in love with the person who saved him from the sea (which was Ariel) but he was led to believe that it was another human girl. How do we handle situations such as the one that Ariel had to deal with, in the real world?

In life we have to go through the trails, choose our path, and make smart decisions based on what we think the outcome will be. Ariel raced against the clock to secure her dream man with a "true love's kiss." She also had to make the life threatening decision to either kill her prince to save herself, or die. Maybe not as dramatic, but it's these very decisions that we have to make on a daily basis that could have an everlasting effect on the way our lives play out. All we can do is take a chance and hope they are worth it in the end.

At some point, whether one believes it or not, we all must die and pass into the next phase of life, or afterlife as someone or something else. Plants, animals, humans, and many more things die in the universe. In the end, Ariel chose not to kill the love of her life to save her own. She accepts the prince's decision to marry the human girl and surrenders herself to the sea. She dissolves into foam, becoming one with God, as an air spirit. The trails we make in the world not only impact yourself, but others as well.

The story of "The Little Mermaid" has become a global franchise from television shows and movies, to clothing lines and memorabilia. It has also served as a form of inspiration toward the way of life in the Transgendered Community. It is a story that will be around for many more centuries and generations to come. Ariel's love, life, and death transcend past the realm of fairytale. Her fable seeps into our everyday reality, equipping us with the knowledge and insight it takes to face our issues head on. At the end of the day we have to live our lives and make the choices we feel in our hearts, no matter what the risks are. Peace be with you! - Darius Conway/ Darionce'



Darius Conway is the founder and CEO of Darius Conway Inc., specializing in Art & Entertainment, Public Relations, Marketing, & Management. He also designs his own fashion line, and is a spokesperson and rolemodel for the transgendered community.



www.FaceBook.com/DariusConwayINC

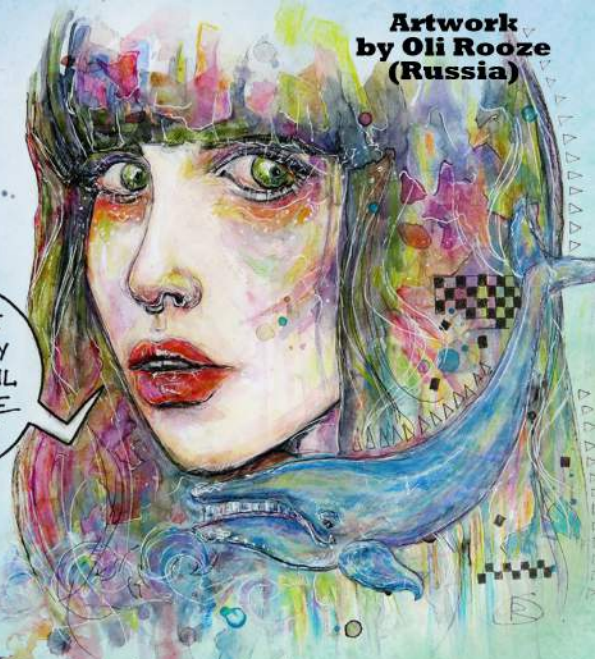
Finding Your "Happy"

By Nicole Aguilar

They say that when you're caught in a riptide, you should swim with it, not against it. You can swim toward the shore as hard as you can, but you won't get there. You're stuck and you will continue to be dragged out to sea. Life is very much like the ocean. It is full of strong currents that we need to learn how to swim through. Tides change and it's how you choose to navigate them that will ultimately lead you to your "Happy".

I BELIEVE
SOMEDAY MY
OCEAN SOUL
WILL RISE
WITH THE
SUN

Artwork
by Oli Rooze
(Russia)



All my life I've wanted to work in entertainment and it's exactly what I wound up doing. I have an amazing job. I love the job. But, as the company grew over the past year, something changed. During those months I have gained weight, cried, and made myself sick over not getting along with some of my colleagues, and for what? I don't go to work every day looking for the cure to cancer; I produce movie trailers. I put 100% of myself into everything I do. When I put my mind to something, I do it. Blood. Sweat. Tears. It's not that I don't love entertainment or what I do any more... but there are things keeping me from being truly happy. How many thankless 12-14 hour days can I work before losing my mind? How many weekends can I be on call and come into the office whenever a client has a "fire drill"? How many months can I withstand having no time to enjoy the amazing relationship I'm in? Why did a cushy job and great salary make me feel like it was ok to stop enjoying my life?

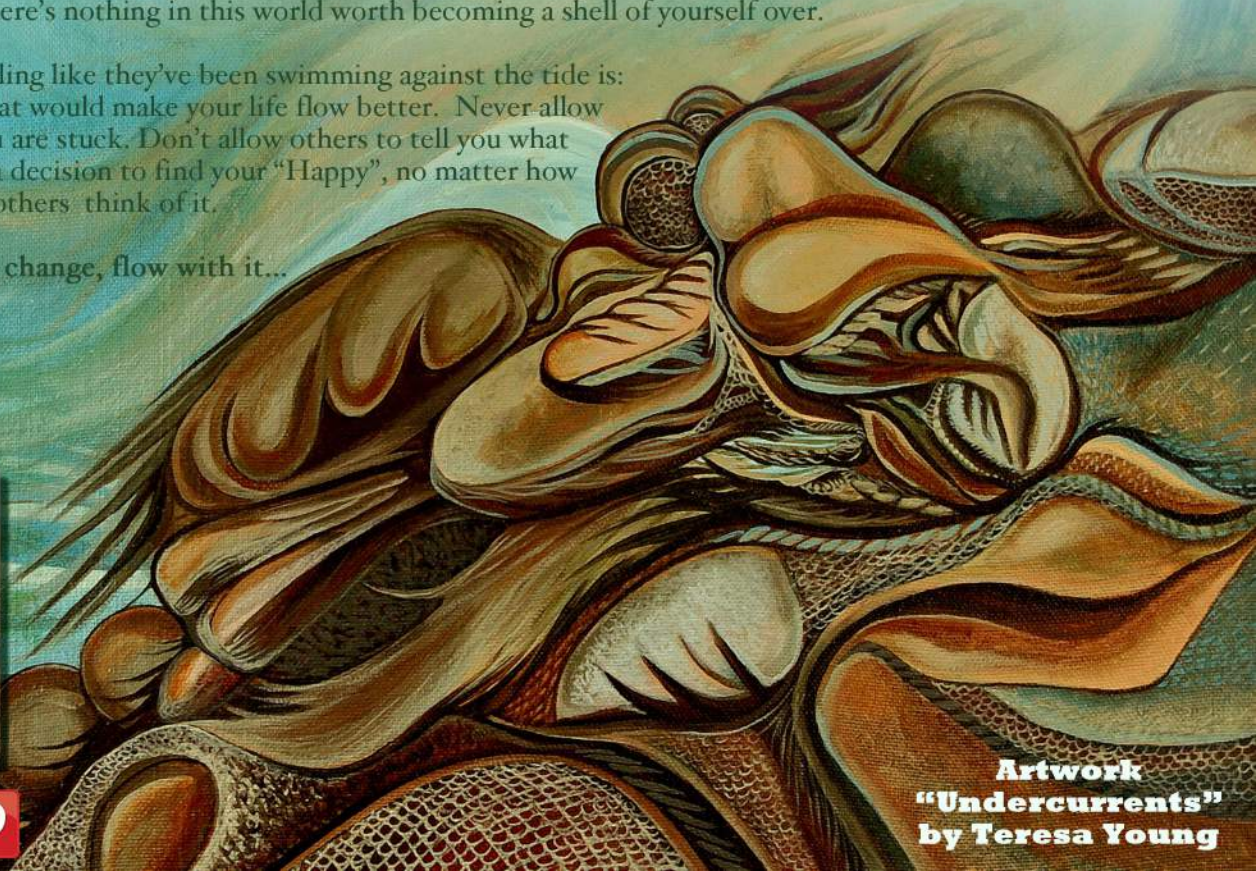
Overall, the past few months were of me frantically trying to swim for the shore. I was trying to adapt even after I knew it wouldn't happen. "Failure" and "Quitter" are two words that I struggled with day in and day out. If I can't get these new people to like me and do the amazing work I know I'm capable of.... I'm a failure. If I go to my boss and tell him that I'm leaving because I can't get my footing with this growing and evolving company... I'm a quitter. The reality is, I'm neither. I know what works for me and what doesn't and I know how much of myself I've sacrificed to try to make something work that is just not going to. So that's where it ends.

Ultimately, after months of contemplating what the next step should be, I realized, I needed to move on. I decided to take back my life, put in two weeks notice and explore the many possibilities that life has for a person. I've been actively looking into other companies and studios to bring my talent to. I've been getting back to the basics of me: working out, enjoying life, and smiling. There's nothing in this world worth becoming a shell of yourself over.

My advice for anyone feeling like they've been swimming against the tide is: Stop. Breathe. Figure out what would make your life flow better. Never allow yourself to feel as though you are stuck. Don't allow others to tell you what you should be doing. Make a decision to find your "Happy", no matter how hard the decision is or what others think of it.

When your life is meant to change, flow with it...

Nicole
2016



Artwork
"Undercurrents"
by Teresa Young

FREEDOM OF THE SEAS: MERMAID MEDITATION

By Michelle Ciccio



This specific meditation came to me when I bought my daughter a shirt with a mermaid on it, last summer. It said "Free to Be Me" on it and it got me thinking about mermaids. She asked me if I thought they existed and we read a few children's books on them. I do believe in the possibility of them existing. I can't say I 100% believe they exist unless I were to see one, but why not? I have seen stranger things. I started thinking about what life as a mermaid might be like. I thought about how they have such a huge amount of space to swim and live, but it also must be very confining to have to hide their existence from humans, which led me to think about us. We all put on these masks of, "Everything is ok, I'm happy, I'm fine!" but in truth many of us struggle everyday. So I thought if we could just choose to live as mermaids for short amounts of time and feel their freedom it could be very freeing for us.

I feel like everyone needs an outlet to let go of all the day to day stress and anxieties we hold in. I choose to de-stress and rebalance in healthy ways instead of drinking like a fish (no pun intended) or choosing other unhealthy vices. When I set down to meditate and set everything up, I am consciously putting my energy out into the universe that this is my time to reconnect and rebalance. Then, as I do a meditation (whether it is a guided meditation where I am envisioning something or completely trying to be still and quiet the mind) I focus entirely on that moment. I don't allow myself to worry about my "to-do" list. That stuff can wait a little while. I need to rebalance or I won't be any good to anyone if I keep sick or I'm full of worry and anxiety all the time. I feel like it allows me a little chunk of time to just focus on positive intentions and it releases the day to day crap that has built up. I always feel better when I'm done meditating. Either I feel more energized right away, or sometimes I feel very tired (when I am doing nighttime meditation) to help me sleep.

WHAT YOU NEED

You can do this meditation with or without the following items (The most important thing is to find a quiet space). I get my supplies from a local store in the Poconos called Planet Earth Gallery or www.AzureGreen.net is a great website. I always recommend to physically be there to purchase your crystals because you will never get the right one if you should mail order it. You need to hold it and look at them and see which crystal "speaks" to you.

- *White candles (for peace and balance)
- *Blue Candle (to represent the ocean and tranquility)
- *Clear Quartz Crystals (Quartz Crystal vibrates all of the color frequencies of the spectrum, balances all chakras, cleans the atmosphere of negative energies, balances all endeavors, and amplifies and cleans the energies of your other stones.)
- *Blue Calcite (Calcite is a powerful amplifier and cleanser of various types of energies. This calming stone increases psychic ability, assists in astral travel, brings about stability, and stimulates trust in oneself.)
- *Your favorite incense
- *Seashells

GETTING STARTED

First, find a quiet space. Some people prefer their bedroom, outdoors, or even sitting in the shower. (If meditating in the shower, please use caution, and make sure someone else is home to check in on you.) I do not recommend meditating in the bath tub because of the risk of drowning. If you have ocean sounds music, feel free to put that on or go online and look up ocean sounds or ambient noise on Pandora. This will help put your mind into this specific meditation.

Now you are ready to begin your visualization. This may take a few times reading through before you are ready to do this. You are free to add things to make this your own personal meditation and journey. This should be done in a place you feel safe to be free and release any worries or anxieties you have. Like a mermaid, you may feel trapped—Trapped by stress of being a parent, your job, bills, caring for others, and so many other things. I would imagine mermaids must feel trapped as well. They have the whole world they can swim around in and explore, but they can never let their existence be known. How scary would that be? Being a mermaid is also probably a very freeing experience. Think of all the wonders they must see and how the water must feel on their skin/scales. Think of all the other creatures of the ocean they can play with. They don't have all the stressors we humans have, so let's pretend we are one with them for now and become a mermaid. Let's begin.

Take 3 deep, cleansing breaths. Breathe in through your nose for the count of 3; when you breathe in, imagine a pure white healing light. Hold that breath for 3, then exhale for 3. Now upon the exhale, imagine all the negativity, all the stress and anxiety blowing out with that dark and negative breath.

Imagine you are sitting on top of a cluster of rocks on the edge of a bay. The sun is hot and shining down on your skin. The sky is the deepest shade of blue you have ever seen. Not another person anywhere in sight. All you hear are seagulls, and waves splashing against the rocks. You feel tiny gusts of wind on your bare skin and you stand on the rocks, taking in 3 deep cleansing breaths. You dive in. When your skin gets fully submerged in the water, you feel your legs start to tingle. Like magic, you watch clearly through the water as your legs transform into a beautiful glittery tail.

Imagine what your tail looks like. You are completely calm as this happens and you feel like this is how you SHOULD be. There is a feeling of freedom that comes over you: A feeling of escape from the day to day worries. All you have to do is swim and enjoy the wonders of the ocean. As you explore, visualize what you see. What animals do you see? Can they speak to you? What does the water feel like? Is it warm with patches of cold water? The important thing is to completely get lost in what you are experiencing. Use your creative mind to concentrate on the experience of being a mermaid, and on what you see, smell, feel, taste. Use all of your senses. Use this time to be free and explore the ocean. Release all your stress into the water as you swim.

When you feel like you are ready to come back, start to swim back to shore. Imagine yourself lying on the beach. Feel the grittiness of the sand beneath you, and the warm sun on your skin. Your legs return and you feel completely at peace and ready to stand on your feet and face the world again.

Take 3 more deep cleansing breaths. Open your eyes.

Extinguish the candles and put your crystals away until next time. (A great way to cleanse your crystals of any negative energy they absorb is to put them under the full moon each month or rinse them in the ocean. You could even bring home some water from the ocean and wash them during the full moon.)

This is a meditation that works best if you do it a few times a week. If you feel like this meditation has helped you, continue to add to this special place. As you practice you will become more relaxed, quicker, and stay in more of a meditative state. This even works as a guided meditation for children. At bedtime you can put on some ocean sounds for your child and talk them through this meditation. I meditate with my 7 year old daughter and have done so since she was 3. It is a great tool for children to cope with stress and wind them down before bed. Studies have shown meditation can help children relax and focus better in school and at home. It strengthens the immune system, decreases aggressiveness and anxiety, and improves their outlook on life. When we meditate together before bed we do not use candles or incense, but she does have a collection of crystals around her aquarium in her bedroom. Enjoy and have fun with this!

Michelle Ciccio was born and raised in NJ, and now lives in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania.

She's a mom to a strong willed, creative, too smart for her own good, 7 year old. She is also a warrior and battles Multiple Sclerosis as well as other health issues on a daily basis. She uses meditation, eats healthy, and tries to lead a generally "crunchy" lifestyle as best as she can for her and her family's health. Michelle was also blessed with the gift of connection to the spirit world. She does psychic readings in person, if local, or by phone! You can contact her for a personal reading at

Michelle_Ciccio@hotmail.com

Artwork:
"Exhale"

by Teresa Young
(Nova Scotia Canada)



Mermaid Cakes

By Lulu Bakes

Ingredients:

- 1 Box Cake Mix of Choice (make according to box)
- 1 Batch Homemade Frosting (recipe below) OR
- 2 Tubs Store Bought Frosting
- Piping Bags/ Piping tips
- Melting Chocolate (ie Wilton's Chocolate Wafers)
- Chocolate Piping Bag or Squeeze Bottle
- A Paint Brush
- Food Coloring
- Sprinkles/Disco Dust/ Edible Glitter/ Etc..
- Chocolate Molds
- Wax Paper
- Sharpie Marker

Homemade Buttercream or Cream Cheese Frosting:

- 1 Package Cream Cheese
- 1 Stick of Butter

(If making butter cream, use two sticks of butter and omit the cream cheese)

6-8 cups of Confectioners' Sugar

- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla or Almond Extract for Flavor
- Milk (if needed for texture)

Mix together cream cheese and/or butter until soft. Add your extract until blended together. Add sugar one cup at a time until creamy and smooth. Add milk 1-2 teaspoons at a time, if needed to make the frosting softer. Add food coloring until desired color is reached.

Preheat your oven to the temperature specified on the box. Begin mixing your cake mix according to the instructions on your boxed cake and distribute evenly in to cupcake liners ***Tip from Lulu Bakes- Using a small or medium sized cookie scoop will help you measure the perfect amount of cake batter for each cupcake. I use a medium scoop and use 1.4 scoops per cupcake liner. All cupcakes should rise to the same size!

*** Place the cupcakes in the oven.

Don't forget to set your timer!

While your cupcakes are baking you can begin to make your frosting. If you are using store bought frosting simply add a little bit of food coloring at a time (100 drops of food coloring = 1 tsp) until you feel you've reached your desired color (if using homemade frosting use the steps under the recipe). Once your frosting is mixed, fill your piping bag (if using). Once your bag(s) are filled place the frosting in the refrigerator to keep cool. DO NOT skip this step if you're using store bought frosting. It is a much softer consistency than homemade frosting, and the frosting will get very warm in your hand while piping the cupcakes.

Now check on those cupcakes if you haven't done so already!
Set them aside to cool.

For the chocolate seashells I used candy molds. I buy my candy molds from Candy Land Crafts in Somerville, NJ but some popular molds can usually be found at Michael's, Hobby Lobby, or even Amazon. If you have never worked with chocolate before it is important to know that chocolate can burn very quickly. Never leave in the microwave or double broiler for too long. Constantly check it and stir to make sure you have the right texture. Once chocolate is burned there is no saving it- it tastes awful and is impossible to work with.



To melt the chocolate for the seashells I used a small chocolate piping bag (these are made by Wilton's- I bought mine at Michael's). You can also melt it inside of a plastic squeeze bottle with the cap off. Once the chocolate was melted I filled my molds and popped them in the freezer to set. They only need a few minutes in the freezer. To decorate my chocolates I used a variety of disco dusts and edible glitters, a small paint brush, and some water. ***if you have never used disco dust or edible glitters before, please do some Google research before using. Both are safe to eat and will pass through your body but neither are FDA approved*** Dip your paint brush in water and lightly wet the chocolate (too much water will cause the chocolate to smudge and melt). Now dip the same brush in the dust or glitter of your choice (one color at a time) and brush onto your chocolate. Keep going over the same spots until the desired effect is reached. Set these aside.

For the mermaid tails lay down wax paper on your counter. With your sharpie or permanent marker draw out your tails. I did this freehand, you can also print pictures and trace them. Keep in mind that chocolate spreads, so make them a little skinnier than you'd actually want it to be. Now turn your paper over- you don't want to put the chocolate directly on the marker. Melt the chocolate of your choice/color in a small bowl and add to your squeeze bottle (you'll need a lot of chocolate for this so melting directly in the bottle will take you too long). Start tracing your outlines and fill in the tails. Shake the paper around a little to spread the chocolate in to your outline. Once hard you can remove from the wax paper to decorate (about 10 minutes).

Chocolate cannot be colored with normal food coloring. Chocolate is an oil based substance and food coloring you buy in the super market is water based. Oil and water do not mix! If you put a water based coloring in your chocolate you will harden and ruin the chocolate. It's best to buy pre colored chocolate wafers or buy oil based chocolate coloring- Candy Land sells this.

You should now be ready to assemble your cupcakes. Frost the cupcakes with either your piping bag or a knife. Add your chocolate shells and mermaid tails and enjoy!



Leyna Lyon lives in central New Jersey and is the mastermind behind Lulu Bakes! Her passion lies in "tastings", all small desserts that can be picked up and popped in to your mouth without having to sit down with a plate and fork. Bigger isn't always better and she believes that variety, especially at the dessert table, is always a good thing. If you're having a party or event and can't decide what to bring let Lulu help! Birthday Parties, Bridal Showers, Party Favors and Holidays are the perfect time to share some sweets with your guests. WOW your guest with some unusual treats at your next event because cakes are so last year!

Please contact Leyna for more information and pricing. She can deliver to most areas in Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, and Union counties in NJ.



www.luluscakepopshop.com

TROPICAL TREATS

with Jonathan Kertis

NJ Native, Jonathan Kertis is currently studying at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in NY, to become a certified health counselor! He is looking forward to graduating this August!



Summer is finally here! After endless snow fall, frostbitten toes, and using all my sick days to stay home and watch Golden Girls, it's time to put on some sandals and sunscreen. Summer has always been my favorite season. I enjoyed all aspects of summer: trips to the beach, stealing ice pops before dinner, spraying my sister in the face with the hose, and eating. Eating and cooking are two things I have enjoyed and developed a career out of, as a Holistic Health Counselor. Here are two healthy, fresh, and satisfying summer favorites to enjoy poolside.

Watermelon Mint Juice



This is an excellent juice to bring with you to the beach since watermelon is by far one of the most hydrating fruits. Watermelon has natural electrolytes, potassium- to aid in nerve and muscle function, and also promotes healthy teeth and gums. This fruit is full of vitamins A, C, and B6.

The combination of watermelon and mint is delicious and refreshing. If you are not a fan of mint, try rosemary.

WHAT YOU NEED

- * Whole or half a seedless Watermelon (depending on how much you want)
- * Mint to taste.

DIRECTIONS

1. Slice your watermelon in half and scoop out all of the pink fruit.
2. Refrigerate the fruit for an hour or longer.
3. Place the cold fruit into a blender and pulse until you have a vibrant pink liquid.
4. Strain your juice in a fine mesh strainer for a smooth juice.
5. Add the mint to your juice and let it sit in the refrigerator for a half hour.
6. By this time, your juice should be infused with a nice sharp mint taste.

Banana Blended Banana Ice Cream



This is one of my staples. Bananas are full of nutrients and could easily pass for a substantial meal if eaten in abundance. Bananas are naturally free of fat, cholesterol and sodium. This delicious fruit has natural sugars which the body breaks down easily

and makes a great snack pre or post work out. The options are limitless with this delicious snack and it could easily pass for any meal, any time, anywhere!

WHAT YOU NEED

- * Bananas (frozen)
- * Blender
- * Nuts, berries, seeds, powders, etc...

DIRECTIONS

1. Freeze the bananas for at least 2 hours in a Ziploc bag.
2. Defrost the bananas until they develop a sticky residue on the outside.
3. Place the bananas in a blender and pulse until it becomes the consistency of ice cream.
4. Empty the banana ice cream into your bowl and add your choice of toppings.

My Top 3 Banana Combos!

1. Coconut flakes, drizzled agave, and cinnamon.
2. Diced peaches and mulberries.
3. Cacao powder and a spoonful (or two) of peanut butter.



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www.IntegrativeNutrition.com

BREAKING THE MER-MOLD: BODY IMAGE

with Karina Beraldo, *The Curvy Mermaid*

AZ: I think it is very interesting that you decided to depict the mermaid in a way that goes against the cliché Hollywood mold, of being very thin and overly skinny. What made you decide to depict the mermaid in a more curvy form?

KB: I wanted to see how it would be accepted since it is not your typical depiction of these beautiful creatures. She was being represented in an unusual way, but to my surprise, it was received pretty well!

AZ: How do you think this will help young girls who struggle with their own body image?

KB: I think if a girl admires my work and sees that I can portray the beauty of any body shape, skin color, hair type, etc., maybe she'll look in the mirror and see more positive things about herself!

AZ: Have you gone through your own battles with body image?

KB: When I was a teenager, I was very shy and did not like to be noticed! Ironically, at this time I was skinny! Nowadays, my only battle is to be able to buy clothes in my size, because in Brazil it is not very common that brands produce plus size collections!



"Blue Curvy Mermaid"

"Rachel Brice"

AZ: If so, how did you overcome those battles?

KB: At the end of college I lost my father so it was a very sad and lonely time. I started doing belly dance to help me to lose the shyness and it helped me realized that I needed to live each moment intensely, in the memory of my father. He was such a cheerful and optimistic person! At that time, I realized that it did not matter what my weight was at, I could do whatever I wanted! I danced, I met my boyfriend, I walked with my friends regardless of my size, and if I was ok with myself, other people were too!

AZ: What advice can you give other young girls who are struggling with their own insecurities of body image?

KB: Don't waste your time worrying about what others are thinking of you, but do what makes you happy! I like to eat, I like to go to nice restaurants and cook, and I will not stop doing it just because people think I should lose weight! You have to worry about being healthy and having fun with people! Here in Brazil, we use an expression that says "Cultivate Friendships!" Think of your life as a flower that needs nurturing to stay beautiful and healthy!

AZ: What would you like to change about the pressures that society puts on young women to look a certain way or be a certain weight?

KB: This pressure will only change when women become true masters of their bodies! We need to stop looking at each other with such critical and unfriendly eyes! What does it matter if the girl next door has short hair, or if she is fat, or not wearing any makeup?

AZ: Mermaids in pop culture are often portrayed as very sexy, provocative beings. How would you define "Sexy?" What does sexy mean to you?

KB: To me, being sexy doesn't necessarily mean "being beautiful", and it's definitely not about being mostly naked! It's the way a person moves, the things you say, the look, the things you love! CONFIDENCE! Some people say that belly dancing is sexy, but I really think it all depends on the person. I do not think I'm sexy, I'm more cheerful on stage. If you ask me who I think is sexy, I think Chris Cornell (OMG) is very sexy, Javier Bardem, but they are not necessarily handsome guys. Christina Hendricks is the epitome of a sexy and beautiful woman! Brazilian actresses Juliana Paes and Maria Fernanda Candido are extremely sexy too.

AZ: What do you love the most about mermaids?

KB: The wavy, slow movements of the water seem to evoke that feeling of sensuality. I like to draw delicate, sensual women and I like to draw mystical creatures. Mermaids seem to fuse both together! I have a special passion for water and aquatic beings, it is something that has always fascinated me since I was a child!



Karina Beraldo is a 33 year old textile designer and illustrator from São Paulo, Brazil. In her spare time she loves to do Bellydancing!

AZ: I see that you are into Belly Dancing. How do you connect both mermaids with Belly Dancing?

KB: Both are very feminine, and perhaps in both the fantasy world and in the real world! We must not lose femininity with evolution and not confuse femininity with fragility!

"Green Curvy Mermaid"



To Find and Purchase More of Karina's Work, Visit:
www.KarinaBeraldo.wix.com/KarinaBeraldo
www.Behance.net/KaBeraldo
www.Society6.com/KarinaBeraldo

MEET OLI ROOZE



COVER ARTIST



"Pink Elephant"

Russian artist Oli Rooze's artistic mission is to represent Contemporary Art. Although her artwork is simple in execution, this does not mean that it lacks raw emotion. In her impressive body of work, we can see the different emotional states of a person, from sadness to moments of happiness and joy to moments of indifference. She uses a unique and whimsical mixed style with a touch of grunge; predominant dirty spots splatter her work spontaneously around her subject. She achieves her effect by applying one layer to another, using watercolor and acrylics. Her work is inspired by complete freedom of thought, which is emphasized in the frenzied usage of vibrant color!

 @OliRooze



Click any button to learn
more about Oli Rooze's Art!

"Siren Song"
Acrylic on Canvas,
11"x14"

The Art of TERESA YOUNG

CLICK HERE
To Buy
Teresa Young
Prints &
Merch!

WWW.TERESA-YOUNG.NET

Canadian native Teresa Young has been creating art for nearly four decades, but it wasn't until last year that she found her passion in painting the subject of the beautiful mystical mermaid! However she is no stranger to the ocean! Today she talks to "Abra-zine!" about her life growing up near the coastline, and her artistic process in which she loves to work, in acrylics, pastels, pen, and stained glass.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Abstracted Visions

I believe abstraction in art is merely a way of expressing our own inner "landscapes" or emotional atmospheres. I strive to do this with my patternistic, fractal compositions.

Surreal Fantasies

Surrealism is a way of expressing our inner child, our ability to play with reality and life around us. Also, it can be a route to inner self exploration or even escapism in its strongest form.

The Result: Abstracted Surrealism

My artwork contains strong aspects of both Surreal Fantasies and Abstraction, making for a meld of two strong forms that express my inner visions in a unique and enticing way.

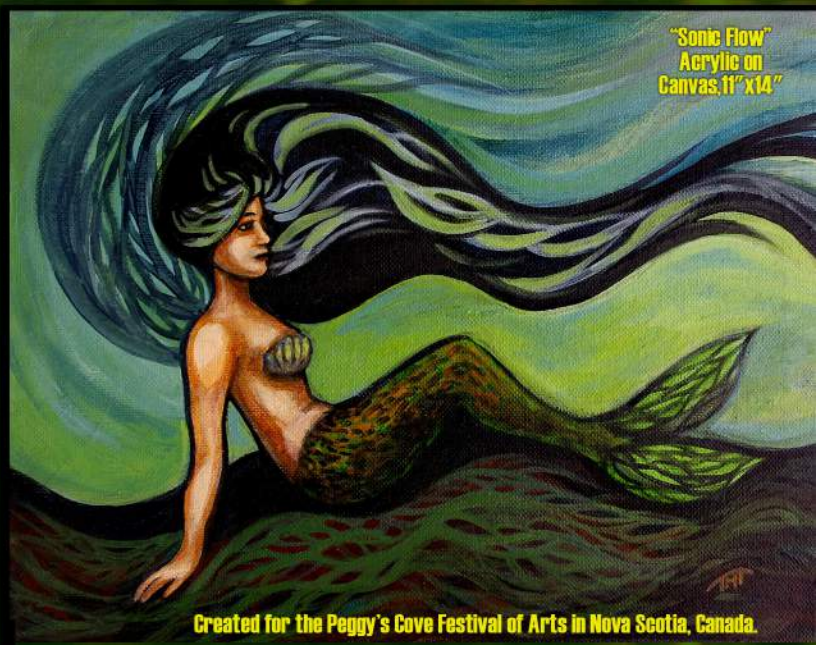
AZ: A lot of your artwork seems to be done in green & blueish tones, or sea/ocean/mermaid related. Please tell our readers, what intrigues you about these themes?

TY: Well, I have always loved green, and of course it finds its way into my art because of that. I grew up on the west coast of Canada and did scuba diving quite a bit in the Pacific Ocean in my late teens. I believe those experiences most likely influenced my inner visions greatly. The sea is very captivating and the places that I've lived over my lifetime tend to be sea coasts. Oh, and my father was a fishing captain, so maybe I just didn't have a choice? Surrounded by the sea, sounds exotic, doesn't it? Hahah!

AZ: What is it about mermaids that inspires you to paint them?

TY: I don't really remember painting or drawing mermaids before last year, when I was asked to demonstrate painting at the opening night for the Peggy's Cove Festival of Arts. I was one of four artists on hand and the theme was fish. I'm not all that great at fish, and I really love painting figurative art, so the mermaids seemed like a great solution at the time. I've been peppering my work with them ever since.

"Sonic Flow"
Acrylic on
Canvas, 11"x14"



Created for the Peggy's Cove Festival of Arts in Nova Scotia, Canada.





Mermaid Musings

GOO GOO FOR GA GA: THE ART OF DANIEL FERNANDEZ

I'm an Art Student from Spain who loves all the strange things in the world. I love searching for the meaning of life. My art is my life. Lady Gaga is my biggest inspiration in the world. I learned a lot from her!



For University I had to design a book cover, and this is my rendition of one of the most beautiful fairytales ever: Andersen's "Little Mermaid". I made it with pencil colors, watercolors and edited with Photoshop (water).

"Roseland's Rose"

"The Mermaid of the Fork"

"The Oyster Was His World"



**CLICK HERE
To Buy Daniel's
Prints & Merch!**

**"Venus"
Watercolor
& Photoshop**

"I made a lot of "Venus-Gaga" illustrations, but all of them were before I listened to the song! So I decided to make a new illustration about my VENUS vision, after I listened to it. I was inspired by Lady Gaga's albino makeup she used in London, the hair-style she used on the Venus cover, the seashells, the sea, the universe, and of course, I had the help of the Goddess Venus."

**Find More
Daniel Fernandez
Art Below!**


@DibuMonster

Kharis Ashley

Princess Glamour Ads



My name is Kharis Ashley. I am 26 and currently live in Boulder, Colorado.

I have been drawing all the time since I was a little girl. People seemed to like my drawings, but most of the time, my art would just end up in a sketchbook, box, or drawer. When I discovered Deviant Art, it gave me a place to show my work and that really inspired me. People following and commenting on my work from all over the world is amazing and so much fun. I love pleasing my fans! Art is not a career for me, but something I enjoy as a wonderful addition to my complicated life.

My art is digital, done in Photoshop with a tablet. I usually start with a pencil sketch, that I scan and paint over. In the past, I worked primarily with pencils and markers and never did much traditional painting because of the effort in set up, brush cleaning, etc. Digital allows me to paint and use color with all sorts of effects and no mess.

I have always liked to draw girly/fashion subjects. I am a clothes, shoe, and makeup junkie; I follow fashion and beauty news, youtube videos on makeup, etc. Once I joined Deviant Art, the popularity of Disney princesses was clear. I soon began to reimagine them in my more realistic, glamour/pinup style. Later, I thought it would be fun to draw upon my makeup passion and the graphic arts benefits of digital media to create fictitious ads. On an earlier Ariel piece, a fan joked that she would need waterproof mascara and I knew that would be the theme for the next ad (L'Ariel, next page).



"Ariel Awaits"
By Kharis Ashley

L'ARIEL

Because you're worth it.



VOLUMINOUS
Waterproof Mascara



L'ARIEL
PARIS

Princess Ariel - star of stage and screen™

"I've imagined Ariel as a cosmetics spokesmodel. Because of her importance as a Disney Princess, she was able to create her own line of products."



“Coffee in the Sea”

By Beatrice Bennett
(The Philippines)

“Once upon a time I used to work as a barista in Starbucks and I was so amused with the story of how they ended up with the twin tailed mermaid. She probably found the coffee so great that she decided to help the sailors!”



[Vist my DA Portfolio!](#)



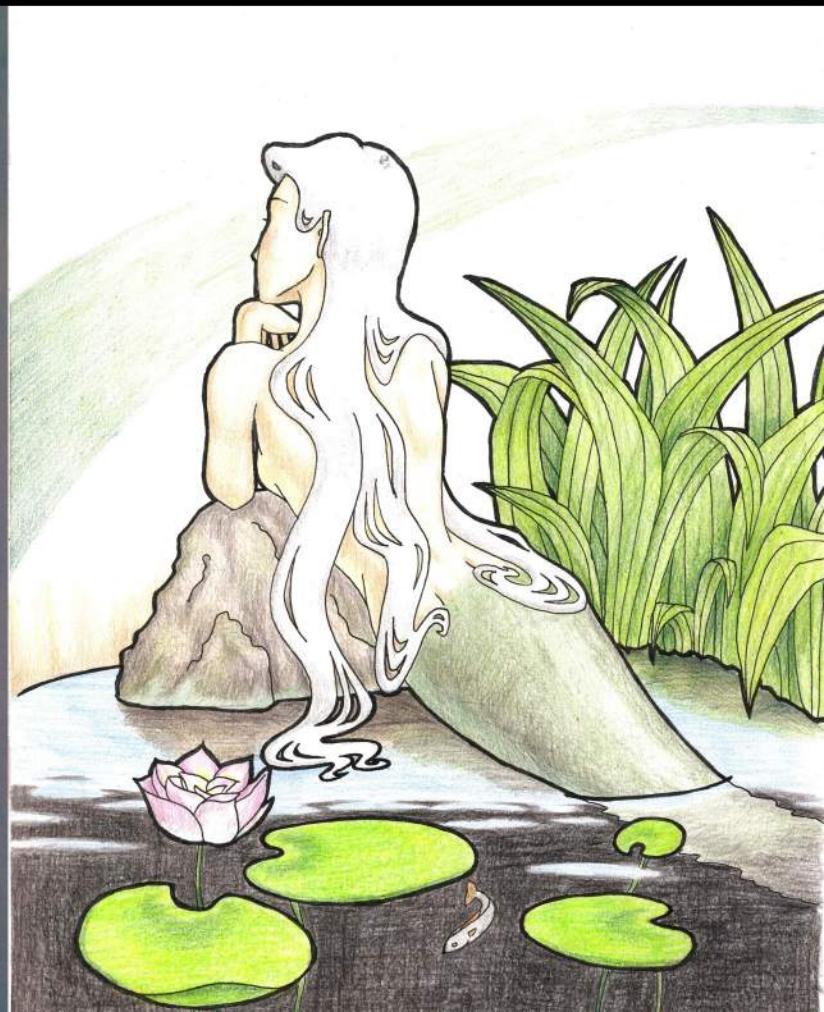
“Nayerie”

By Yelizaveta Rassokhina
(Russia)

“That's not a mermaid, but a nayerie from Russian author, Vera Kamsha's book "Gleams of Aeterna". Nayeries are similar to mermaids, only they have snake's tails.”



[Vist my DA Portfolio!](#)

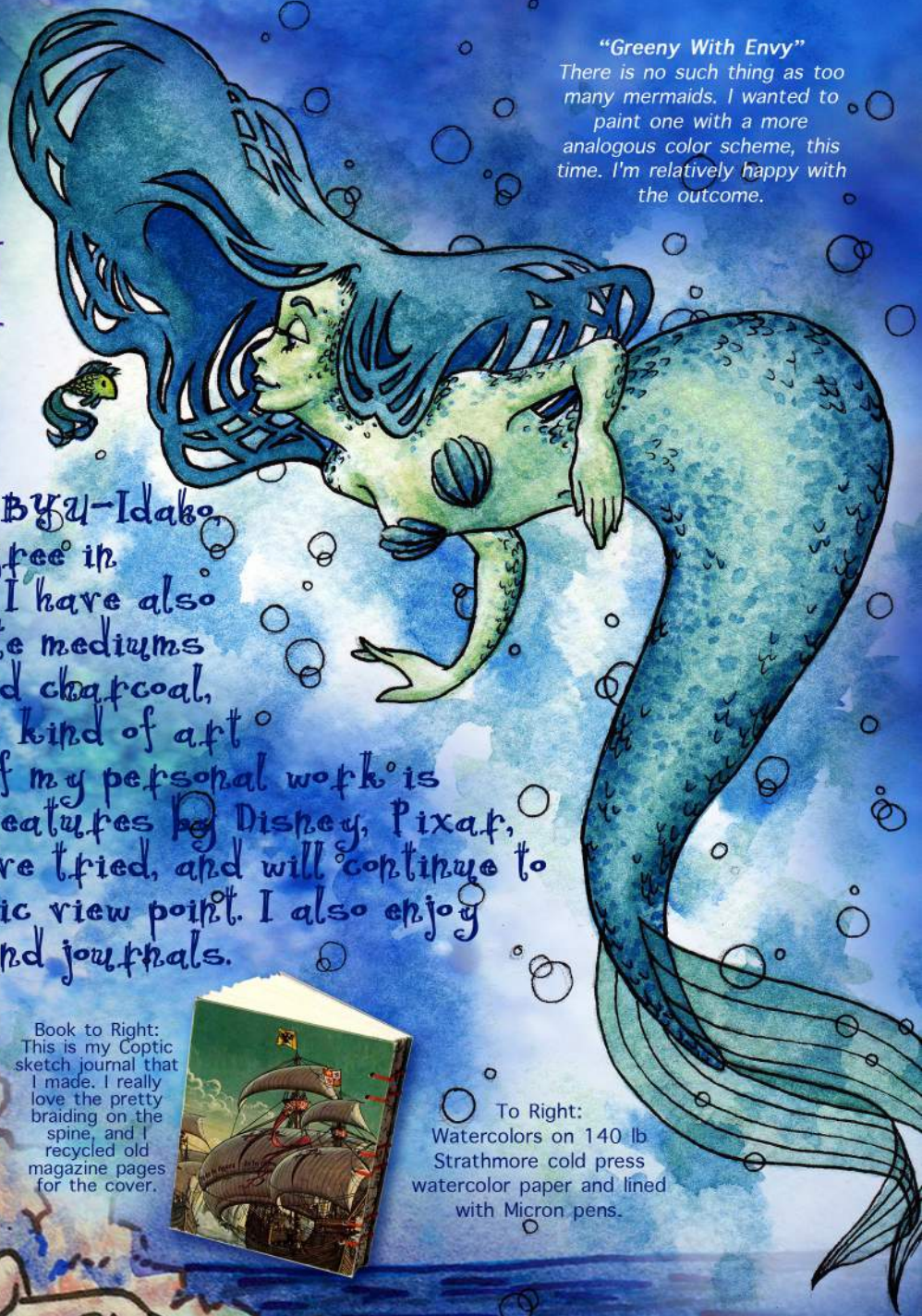




THE ART OF BETH AUCOIN

"Greeny With Envy"

There is no such thing as too many mermaids. I wanted to paint one with a more analogous color scheme, this time. I'm relatively happy with the outcome.



I am a recent graduate of BYU-Idaho, and I received Bachelor's degree in Integrated Studio Art, though I have also studied education. My favorite mediums are watercolors, graphite, and charcoal, though I enjoy dabbling in any kind of art I can get my hands on. Most of my personal work is inspired by great animated features by Disney, Pixar, and Dreamworks, though I have tried, and will continue to try, to develop my own artistic view point. I also enjoy hand-making my own books and journals.

Book to Right:
This is my Coptic sketch journal that I made. I really love the pretty braiding on the spine, and I recycled old magazine pages for the cover.



To Right:
Watercolors on 140 lb Strathmore cold press watercolor paper and lined with Micron pens.



"Beach Side Paradise"

Here's to warm weather! Something we don't get very much of in Idaho.

Watercolors on 140lb Canson watercolor paper and lined with Prismacolor markers.



EYE ART WITH PIXIE COLD



PIXIE COLD (SVENJA)
(GERMANY)

[BUY ART PRINTS HERE](#)

Biography from Pixie Cold's Facebook Page:

Svenja was born in Berlin, Germany and grew up in a creative, big family. She and her five siblings have been enjoying art ever since they can remember and what started as a hobby became Svenja's profession in early 2012. Art means much more to her than when she just grabbed some pencils and paper as a pastime. In fact, art gave a new sense to her life and rescued her, when she was facing a rough time, living on the street without shelter and purpose, rebelling against the grievances in her personal and political environment. In 2009 Svenja discovered the possibilities of sharing her art on the Internet and thus getting her formative experiences and expressions out of her system. To her surprise people appreciated her art and within three years she has become widely known and grew a solid fanbase. Her little daughter now fulfills her life and is the reason why she keeps going, in trying to establish herself with her art.

Svenja originally started as a conventional traditional artist, experimenting with different mediums such as watercolor, acrylics and collages. After her experiences on the street, her depicted subjects got darker and more abstract. Eyes were and still are always the main focus of all her works, as they fascinate her and are able to tell unspoken stories. In 2012 Svenja crossed over to the seemingly endless possibilities of makeup art and photography. While she is taking photographs of her eyes, she is trying to express her feelings and make the viewer of her works dive into another world full of colors, emotions and extravagance. She began to experiment with insects, both dead and living, and integrates them into the total work of art. She always treats the animals with the most possible amount of regard and care and does everything possible to not harm them in any way. What urges her to let the insects be part of her art is her intention to both shock and polarize, but also to bring these beautiful creatures to people's attention and to invoke more appreciation and interest. The twist of combining two apparently incoherent things, makeup and animals, is what made her begin this series. With this impressive body of work, she was able to break free from the clichés of a conventional artist! Svenja is anything but that!

get pixie's beautiful
underwater makeup
tutorials here!



"thalassophobia"

Lyrics by Jeffrey Vore



Artwork:
"Mermaid Hunting"
by Pixie Cold
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(Verse 1)

I dreamt to start a fire
All I needed was a spark
If I formed a blaze, I could thin this ice
But I guess I jumped the shark
Your walls are cold and wet
No embers could come close
Retracted, reclusive
Practically comatose
You were older, wiser?
I chained myself to your lead
You drag me to the shore
You pull me into sea

(Pre-Chorus)

I am a lifeguard with nothing left to save
I am a serpent sleeping in your submerged grave
I am a thalassophobic struggling to breathe
I am a bonded catch just trying to break free

(Verse 2)

An aquatic fantasy
A romance, so I thought
To lure a mermaid
Struggle after struggle I've fought
I've underestimated
Failed to pass this test
You're too convoluted
An hollow enigma lies within your chest
You were older, wiser?
I chained myself to your lead
You drag me to the shore
You pull me into sea

(Pre-Chorus)

I am a lifeguard with nothing left to save
I am a serpent sleeping in your submerged grave
I am a thalassophobic struggling to breathe
I am a bonded catch just trying to break free

(Chorus)

Unless I choose to break these
Chains you've latched onto me
Choose to leave you
Drifting the abyss of the sea
No more will I empathize
Emotions you lack to express
I will breach the surface
I will cut the cord and decompress

(Bridge)

Never will I know the kiss
Of this beast that emerged from the sea
If you won't commence your part
Then I suggest you simply let me be

(Chorus/Climax)

Unless I choose to break these
Chains you've latched onto me
Choose to leave you
Drifting the abyss of the sea
No more will I empathize
Emotions you lack to express
I will breach the surface
I will cut the cord and decompress
I will breach the surface
I will cut the cord and decompress
I will breach the surface
I will cut the cord and decompress
I will breach the surface
I will cut the cord and decompress
I will cut the...



Pixie Cold

The Happy Mermaid

POETRY & POSITIVITY QUOTES BY
ARIEL RYBERG



TWEET:
@nipskin

**'She's
got a
bullet
proof
smile!'**



Hello! It's a mermaid with her land legs here...I'm Ariel! I'm 23 years old, living in Auburn, AL. I'm a fun loving girl with a wide range of artistic talent. I'm currently in school at SUSCC with plans to transfer to Auburn University with my main goal being to achieve a degree in Graphic Design. I plan on getting into the Gaming Industry and if that falls through, I'd like to pursue magazine editing, which is why I'm loving this opportunity!

**"What I'm all about:
Reinventing Myself."**

**Magical
Energy
Radiating
My
Artistic
Identity
During A
Swim**

**"Nothing in
this world is
ugly, except
blind hate."**

**"I am a well-rounded
artist with the heart
of a child..."**

Art by
Oli Rooze
(Russia)



**"I am dependently unique, because I
wouldn't be me had it not been for thee."**



Personal FB

Photography FB

[Ariel Ryberg continued]

Perfection is Dead

Perfection is an art
Known to few and far between,
It's a longing
Only found within a dream.
But what is a dream,
But a fraction of reality;
Scratching the surface
Of complete actuality.
Eroding your cult of personality,
And ending with a bang.
It's insane.
Personal satisfaction
Is all you'll gain.
But the pain within the suffering
Is enough to shed a tear,
On these words
Across this paper
You never want here.
Perfection is dead,
As is chivalry.

A Jaunt for Happiness

When a wonderful,
Whimsical world
Becomes few and far between,
It's time to lay your head
Upon the whisper of a dream.
Keep your eyes closed
And you might just feel the breeze,
From the clouds above your head
That are hidden past the trees.
A waterfall of melancholy
Above a pool of sorrow,
Keeps my mind a driftless lull
Until I sleep tomorrow.
But happiness, my penance spent,
A longing forced to borrow,
Is added to the list of things
I'll beget so on the morrow.

The stroke of a single finger, across my tired cheek keeps my eyes open in wonder, as to where the trace will lead. Grazing across my lips, down my neck, inching its way to my chest, leaving behind a trail of tingling skin. The slightest wisp of the tips of my hair tiptoe across your velvet skin. The scent of mangos and coconuts captivate the surrounding atmosphere. Clear glass then turns frosted as heat arises amidst the pleasure of passion. An incandescent glow emerges from our entwined bodies. I clench my fists with fervency, awaiting the moment where chemistry becomes anthropological. Our lips meet and sparks begin to fly with grace into the atmosphere around our minds. We mesh together as one humanly figure. Your breath caresses my neck, it's warm and smells of a sweet confection. Pulling me towards you, I feel the heat emanating from your body, relaxing my fixated arms that now drape over your shoulders like a thick scarf. Your broad hands and grand torso diminish my sizable frame, as if I were a small doll in the arms of a playful child. Eyes locked, now, in bewilderment as we begin a dance of love. Your alluring eyes captivate my imagination as we speak in such amorous tones, the words of a lifetime, the truth of one's intentions. I give you my heart as free as the wind gives a cool breeze, as oxygen gives a needed breath. A promise of love, protection, and honor. Every single blood cell retracts to my heart as the ends of my body go numb. My chest is pounding like a drum as a reaction to the long lost feeling of hope, desire, and love that is returned to my body and soul, like an aimlessly lost friend. Though this feeling is new, it feels as though I've known it my whole life.

She's a Diamond
That Wants to Stay Cool

Artwork:
"Singing at the Depth"
by Oli Rooze
(Russia)

Delight

www.bulletproofsmile.weebly.com

A Siren's Confession

By Aerika Lewis

Background Art by [Gordon Napier](#)



Aerika Lewis is a 38 year old Virginia Beach, Virginia native who started writing poetry as a child. Her first poem was written in third grade about a woman and her parasol. She used writing as an outlet in middle school. Using the art of poetry as a means of self expression is also how she survived her teen years, boot camp, and it's how she is surviving adulthood now!

My name is Edora
And this is my call of duty.
To bring death to men who think I'm a cutie.
They hear my singing voice
And they have no choice
But to draw near.
To that heavenly sound they so lustfully hear.
At that moment there is no fear
For my beauty is innocence
As so it may appear.
Pitiful sailors, they just want to sail on by
Unaware that they are about
To make their family cry.
You wanna know the reason don't you?
You wanna know why?
Why I smile as their ship sails in my direction
With all these men captivated
By my singing perfection.
As they sink and drown
They are like pigs and frogs
Waiting for dissection.
I have set a trap
And the bait is their idiocy.
Thinking for one moment
That they can get a hold of me.
If I let them get close
What are they gonna do?
Whisper in my ear, "You're beautiful,
And I love you."
I'm supposed to be swept away.
Thinking this love is forever
You have got to be kidding me.
They are not that clever.
Call me bitter, wicked, evil
I don't care, So whatever.
Me? Be all sweet like the little mermaid?
NEVER!!
Mermaids are innocent, sweet, and delightful
But I'm a siren, which means
I'm evil, vicious, and spiteful.
I hate mermaids.
They get on my nerves
They get everyone's attention...
So these sailors get what they deserve.
I know it seems wrong.

But please don't be nervous
Believe me when I say
I'm doing the world a good service.
Mermaids, mermaids
They make people so blind
That they forget about my existence
And wonder why I'm so unkind.
And wanting to redefine
My evil disposition
Wanting to psychoanalyze me
Without my permission.
Jealous of the mermaid?
Not intentionally so.
But evil keeps people away!
Figure it out! Don't you know?
There are times of a struggle
A war within my soul.
In my heart there is a hole
And a wickedness I can't control.
The thought of being good
Sometimes seems nice,
But good brings pain
And I don't wanna pay that price.
Being sweet like a mermaid
Would that even suffice?
Do I need to even ponder on it?
Should I even think twice?
Mermaids are who they are
And this... This is me.
Amazing singing voice
And amazing beauty.
Cruel, heartless and full of envy.
Deceit and wickedness
That you can't see.
The next time you're on your ship
Close your ears and eyes
As you attempt to pass on by.
Ignoring me is the key to survive.
If you don't, this siren promises
You won't make it out alive...

Away With the Sea

Original Song Lyrics By Justina Carubia (Stelladeora)

Darling, you know I would never leave,
If I didn't know it wasn't good for me
To stay here inside these walls
In this hell that I called home
For so long, I was numb to all I knew...

Going over and over this plot in my head
Cuz my only escape is you, thinking I'm dead
This conscious decision will be the death of me...

So I picked up the leftover pieces I had
And I put them together, to make you think that
You were losing the best thing that you ever had
And the worst part about it, I didn't feel bad
From the first time, it felt like
You didn't understand, you just tore me to pieces
You took back the one thing I held in my heart
And ever since then, I've been falling apart...

I can't hold on to this fear of letting go
Of my soul, of a life I used to know
Now she's floating away, floatin away
How's it feel to know that you're losing me
Floating away, floating away
Her mechanical heart now is
Floating Away With the Sea...

So now I'm propelling my plan into motion
I'm heaving my clone toward the bed of the ocean
As I reach to my lungs for a blood curdling scream
I hear you, you're making your way up the mountain
Asking yourself how could you let this happen
So I run, and I hide
And you picked up the leftover petals I had
And you held them together in the palm of your hand
And you knew you lost the best thing you ever had...

You stood there in horror, the look on your face
In that moment I saw all your lies and mistakes
And you stood there and sobbed
As you watched me float away...

Parting is such sweet sorrow,
Here today, gone tomorrow
But my darling your love was just
Too much for me...

I can't hold on to this fear of letting go
Of my soul, of a life I used to know
Now she's floating away, floatin away
How's it feel to know that you're losing me
Floating away, floating away
Her mechanical carcass is
Floating Away With the Sea...



"Away With the Sea" is a song written & performed by Justina's NJ based rockband, Stelladeora. The band plans to record the song for their new upcoming EP. All of their music is based around an original concept titled "Aeron & August: A Mechanical Affaire", which is centered around two very conflicted characters Aeron and August. Aeron creates August, a synthetic woman, for his own selfish reasons. This song paints the picture of a scene in which August fakes her own death to escape from the grips of her controlling master. Will August get away? Will Aeron find out about her plan of escape? (Comic Art by Chris Villanueva)

[Visit Stelladeora's OFFICIAL Concept Page to Find Out Now!](#)



**WATCH OUR LIVE ACOUSTIC
PERFORMANCE OF AWAY WITH
THE SEA ON YOUTUBE NOW!**



**DOWNLOAD
MP3 AUDIO TRACK
ON SOUNDCLOUD!**



**Artwork:
"Windswept"
by Rebecca Sinz
(Elven Star Art)**





POETRY
BY KERRY MARLEY
WITH ART BY REBECCA SINZ



Kerry Marley is a 19 year old writer from Greenville, South Carolina who loves to study the works of Whitman. She is also a fashion designer and a caffeine addict! She also has a line of jewelry called "String of Words" which you can [purchase HERE!](#)

"Sunset"

THE SIREN

I'll pull you in with my glittering eyes
And pull you down with my lonely hands.
I'll tangle you in my sea-salt hair
And tangle you up with heartfelt lies.
I'll whisper a high-tide "I love you,"
Listening to your
Uncontrollably human pulse.
But those words are meant for me as well
Because I want to believe it could be true.
You'll follow me to the water with a kind
Of nonchalance still playing on my lips.
You won't be alive
When I'm done with you
But I'll leave your body for another to find.



"Stargazer"

COASTAL

Our voices float
across the airwaves
And sing each other out to sea,
As we are pulled along
by riptides;
By ocean-current sleep.
I will whisper you a lullaby
As you sink
down among; surrender
To the swirling tide of sheets.
As words begin to fail you,
(Though you insist
you are awake,)
There is so much that
you should know,
Your consciousness slips away,
But there are still words I'm
scared to say.
What if you somehow
remembered all
Those secrets I could speak?
Maybe I'll tell you
when I'm older
And not so much afraid.

SANDY, HALF-SOAKED

All I wanted was to lie
On the ground, unmoving,
Until I had strength
To walk on my own again.
But I began to sink as
The rain and lowering tide began
To wash the sand
Right from underneath me,
Without resolve in me to stand.

I had been away so long,
Unresponsive to your calls,
And you were growing anxious.
You wondered where I was,
Just hoping I was safe.
When you finally stumbled upon me:
Sandy, half-soaked.

And you picked me up
Though I indignantly struggled
And kicked at first.
You held me,
Cradling my face on your hands,
And told me
What a pretty face it was.
Quietly rocking me in your arms,
I regained stamina and stood,
Though you kept holding my waist,
So that I won't fall again.



Rebecca Sinz is a fantasy, fairy and gothic artist from Michigan, USA. You can purchase prints and other things featuring her art on her website: www.ElvenStarArt.com



"A Light In the Dark"

READ MORE KERRY MARLEY POETRY
WWW.COEURDELAPOESIE.BLOGSPOT.COM

The Mermaid on the Rock

By Llinos Mai Thomas

Glistening boldly in the breeze
She stares, a vase of heaven in the moonlight.
Her molten eyes flicker like a flame,
Long hair bleached gold by the sun.

She turns, resplendent in grace
As a smile tickles her lips.
A whisper of laughter cracks the cool night sky
As her tail quivers with possibility.

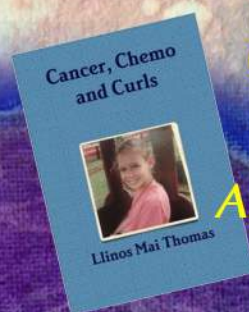
The water ripples with intrigue
As the allure of her moist, youthful skin
Slips down into its azure depths.
With a flick of her tail and a swirling splash

She disappears into the vibrant heart of the
Ocean.

Mermaid
Painting by
Llinos Mai
Thomas



Llinos Mai Thomas is a 27 year old writer, cancer survivor, and speaker from Cardiff, UK. She loves creativity, playing with her guinea pigs, baking, history and reading. She has recently self published her first book called "Cancer, Chemo and Curls" and is currently writing her second.



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"GIVE ME YOUR NAME,
I'LL TELL YOU,
YOUR STORY."

BY RYAN WILSON

Ryan Wilson is an artist,
writer, poet, thinker, musician,
and all around creative spirit
from New Jersey! You can
hear his creations and read his
musings on his Twitter,
Tumblr & Soundcloud pages!



VACUUMS OF SEDUCTION
SECLUDING SELVES
INTO REDUCTIONS OF
CARICATURES FACSIMILES
OF FACES DEPRIVED OF
THEIR SPACES LETTING
FRAGMENTS DEFINE A
WHOLE LETTING GLANCES
LEAD TO BLOWS
PIECES BY PIECES
TELLING MYTHS AND
WEARING MEMES OVER
EYES AND AS I
STUDY YOU,
WE
SUCCUMB
TO...

...AN EXHIBIT
BASED
SOLELY ON MY
INTENT AND
FEARS OF WHO
YOU COULD BE
IF I HAD YOU
SNARED...

...I KNOW
I'M DISEASED OR
SLIGHTLY IMPAIRED
I SUSPECT YOU'RE
AGGRIEVED AT HOW
MUCH I CARE
ESPECIALLY
CONSIDERING
WE'RE NOWHERE
NEAR PAIRED
AND IT'S
CERTAINLY
AGREEABLY AND
JUSTLY UNFAIR,
I'VE CONSUMED ALL
OF YOUR VESTIGES
AND LEFT NONE OF
MINE TO SHARE.

*Artwork:
"Undine Devine"
by Ryan Wilson
Finger paint,
colored pencil,
and oil pastels
on canvas.*

A Heart to Heart with Marvin Sunk

By Renee Conway



Its members hail from the Bayshore area of New Jersey making Marvin Sunk a seven piece live band with their own unique brand of genre-bending rock, jazz, hip-hop and electronica, to which the members and their fans lovingly refer to as "True Grit". With 4 EPs to date and working on their debut album "50,000" from its 2007 humble beginnings as an "In-house" studio project, Marvin Sunk is Casey Burd (Vocals/Trombone), Kilday (Guitar/Vocals), Mike "The Haug" Haughey (Guitar), Tristan Berry (Drums), Ed Marshall (Keys), Joe Stahl (Trumpet), and Stephan Demergis (Bass/Vocals).

Renee: There is no doubt after listening to more than one Marvin Sunk recording that you've honed a unique and recognizable sound all your own. Was this unique sound something you've progressed into from the onset of Marvin Sunk or was it purposely founded- Which leads me to wonder how its players amongst the youngest of Marvin Sunk to the oldest by the way of musical experience and background makes up the talent for your unique blend of instruments?

Casey: I suppose the "unique" sound comes from the different musical backgrounds each of us has. We've all played in several different bands prior to Marvin Sunk and I know the genres of each range from rock, to metal, to jazz, to classical, to ska, to funk, to you name it. I don't think we all sat down and said, "Hey, let's mix all of these styles together", rather it just kind of happened that way by each member's musical preference when writing songs.

Stephan: The younger guys have older influences than this older guy; it has actually awakened or introduced styles. It feels like I never realized they were a part of my musical upbringing.

The Haug: I would say Marvin Sunk's collective sound is a mixture of our influences. Most of us play multiple instruments, which enables us to be more mindful of stepping on each other's toes. In that way, I would say the sound has been cultivated through the years to blend into what we do.

Renee: What are the driving influences or inspiration to write such layered vocals and instrumentals? Much like my experience engaged in some Pink Floyd, I find it hard to listen without being immediately stimulated into wanting a cinematic visual to go along with the instrumentation....

Casey: When it comes to each section of the music, the shifts in major & minor are something that I think all of us in the band are attracted to. I personally like to be challenged as a listener, chord-wise. I'm very much affected by the way certain chords make me "feel". More often than not, when it comes to our music, I find that many sections could be considered major AND minor or happy AND sad at the same time. For me, this is the core of the music that I love to make. Some of my favorite music tends to make me feel elated and melancholy at the same time.

Kilday: It's not something that's planned, it just kind of happens. I tend to go for the foulest chord or note myself...sometimes it works, other times not so much. That's the beauty of how well we work together, we can throw anything at the wall and see if it sticks. I'm a big fan of classical music, so making a landscape of sounds layer-wise is the best. I like to listen to music that I'd consider ear candy, and I'd say we do that from time to time with the instrumentation and vocals.

The Haug: Our songs are so layered, mainly because we have so many people in the band. Sometimes too many parts or overdubs can take away from the song and have it get lost. With Marvin Sunk, we approach each part carefully and explore if it adds a new dynamic, or discern if it clutters the frequencies.

Renee: How hard is it to assemble the 7 players that make up Marvin Sunk in getting the new album "50,000" closer to its completion?

The Haug: The hardest part is working around all of our schedules in order to practice, write, and record. Some of us are in other bands or musical situations that take time away. One thing that is great about this band is that we all really do like making music together. If it's a recording session, rehearsal, or a gig, you will see us with the same energy and focus to make something that sounds great.

Kilday: Honestly, it's not too bad, sure we all have our families and regular jobs to deal with but we all make time for the band. We've been working on the album a long time, but we're closer now than we've ever been to finishing it finally;

Joe Stahl: As one of the newest members of Marvin Sunk, I was a fan of the music before I joined the band. I loved the band, but it was so unlike anything I had ever done, completely out of my comfort zone. It wasn't always easy, but I think I've found my place. And I hope that my presence makes a great band just a little bit better.

Kilday: Having Joe in our band makes it a LOT better!

Renee: How many songs will be released with the new album and what studio are you recording the production in? Tell us what has been the best part of the process in building this body of work for "50,000".

Kilday: We have 4 or 5 more songs to cut and we've got most of the rest that we've already recorded pretty close to a final mix. Throughout the process we've continued to write more music so I'd say the process is never ending, which is okay with me...We may end up with a double album, at least that's where it's heading, so that could be 20+ songs. It's a lot to digest sure, but I believe the songs are interesting enough to keep a listener engaged

Casey: One of the best parts of this process has been the fact that we are recording in Kilday's house, and we're not on the clock!! With that luxury in mind, we've been able to take our time to flesh out ideas for each song. The process has been incredibly enjoyable, a process which I often refer to as "Deep Fried Convenience".

Renee: Your new album "50,000"---What is the reason for wanting to offer this new work as a vinyl production? And will it be available digitally to your fans as well? As a musician in the age of technology, where does Marvin Sunk stand on the distribution of your music?

Kilday: We're going to do all of the regular digital media, CDs & digital downloads, but for me, vinyl is another way to go as well. I still prefer listening to wax over CDs any day of the week. Additionally, the album art comes into play; why go through all of the trouble of putting together a cool image for the cover if no one can really appreciate it? And I've always loved looking at the cover and being able to read the liner notes and lyrics while listening to a record.

The Haug: As a local musician, it is very difficult to get your music heard at all. Our goal is to get people involved and into our songs. This album is unique in that we want them to stand as just that- an album. We have a vision of what these songs can become and believe that people will enjoy listening to them as an experience, not just a one off.



MARVIN SUNK

it's alright...it's alright...it's alright...

Renee: Who produced your video production of your song "Patchwork Salad" and how old is this song? The Kaleidoscope artwork makes this production so much fun to watch!

Kilday: That's Joe Stahl...he killed it (laughs)...It's pretty old; the song has been around since just before Marvin Sunk got started. It's a fun one to play live! A little background on the song itself, the music came from a jam during a party I was at. I was just messing around on an acoustic guitar that was there and the lyrics came on the way to work the next day while I was on the train heading into Newark, NJ. Honestly, I just wanted to write a "drug" song like you used to hear in the 60s and 70s and I guess we've got our own spin on it, but that was the motivation for it.

Renee: Not only is your sound unique but your branding has its own pop art punch to entertain your fans as well---What is the inspiration for the band's name that is being transferred in your branding and who is responsible for the artwork?

Casey: The inspiration for the band's name came from the infamous 1970s Beatles inspired film, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. Marvin Sunk is a character played by Alice Cooper in the film.

Kilday: I do the artwork; Photoshop is a lot of fun! I can definitely say that! Mainly I just enjoy making something that you kind of can't look away from; our mascot "Marvin" has been on almost all of our fliers. I can think of only maybe two (and that would have been before I started using him as our de facto mascot) that he wasn't on the flier.

Renee: Marvin Sunk's harmonic vocals are as interesting and unpredictable as the blend of its 7 different instruments, it's clear they hold equal weight to your unique sound. Personally, when I first heard the band's vocals it was a delightful and refreshing unexpected surprised. What are the influences shaping how you design the use of vocals in your production?

Casey: I think the desire for layered harmonic vocals comes from the fact that MARVIN SUNK is made up of a bunch of Beatles' fans. Most of us grew up listening to them and quite honestly, never stopped listening. Most bands that I'm personally drawn to have multiple singers or multiple harmonies: The Beatles, Eagles, Failure, Stereolab, QOTSA, Grizzly Bear and Annuals, etc.

Kilday: 10cc also comes to mind when it comes to vocals. I'm also a huge fan of Motown, I mean, hell, I grew up listening to Cousin Brucie in the back of the station wagon. Scott Muni from 102.7 FM was definitely a big deal for me as well. I'd call it an education really, Prof. Muni taught me well and he is sorely missed on the radio waves. So really, from a production standpoint, taking in all of the influences we have really does make a difference when we're trying to get a sound or feel for how the music and vocals blend together.

Renee: Dreams? Goals? and Expectations? We all have them. Marvin Sunk's members, both separately and collectively, what are they all hoping for down the road?

Joe Stahl: I don't want to speak for anyone else. Solely speaking for myself, the only expectation I have is making the best music possible that pleases all of the members of the band. In doing so, I think other people will like it if they are exposed to it and give it a chance. I have no expectations of superstardom, or making any money from it and I'm fine with that. It is my creative outlet, and it pleases me. If other people like it, then that will make it all the more satisfying to me.

Kilday: Yes, making loads of money and being a superstar, I don't expect that to happen either...at this point could that even happen with the industry the way it is? I'd say it's doubtful...I just want to make lots of music that sounds cool to me...Dreams? I barely sleep so I don't have many of those...Goals? To always keep making music.

Stephan: It's always a good time playing with this group of guys...that's a dream. The goal can be just do this for a long time...Expectations? I expect you'll have to kill me to get me out of this band...

Kilday: There it is! Renee thanks so much! We all appreciate you taking the time to speak to us. And to those reading, keep listening...Cheers!

Download the FREE "Patchwork Salad" MP3 NOW! 



WATCH THE
"PATCHWORK SALAD"
MUSIC VIDEO NOW!
ONLY ON

YouTube

WWW.MARVIN SUNK.COM





ARIEL UNDINE:

SIREN OF THE SEA

BY
JUSTINA CARUBIA

The way that Ariel views mermaids are not stereotypical with long blonde hair sitting on a rock, looking beautiful to behold. She imagines mermaids to be very alien, otherworldly, and almost fierce and reptilian. To Ariel, they would not resemble humans in the slightest. They would be very animalistic with neon catlike eyes that glow in the dark. She pictures gills on the sides of their neck, long talons and webbed hands, with fangs in their mouths. The fishlike scales on their tails would have all of the vivid colors of a tropical fish, almost lighting up the water like electrical currents. She imagines their skin to be blue or green to match their hair, long and flowing like silk. They would also swim at almost lightning fast speed so they are invisible to the human eye.

She believes that just because we can't see these mystical beings, it does not mean they do not exist! Mermaids are very real to the songstress, and she has felt such a strong connection with these beings that she believes she may have been one in her past life. She also changed her last name to Undine for the stage. The word UNDINE literally means water spirit, which she feels represents her: an Angel Water spirit!

Ariel began to merge her love of mermaids & singing together around the age of 18. She devoted all of her time & money to her concept, from paying producers to buying costumes & makeup, to hiring dancers and producing merchandise. She is also currently in the process of making music videos for all of her songs! She describes her sound as Dark Gothic Electronica, poetic lyrics with haunting overtones. Some of it is uplifting and ethereal and some very mysterious and dark. Her passion lies in telling a story through her music, and taking the listeners to another place and time.

During her time with her band "The Pirate's Siren" in Hollywood, the sound of her vocals were often compared to that of Queen of Goth, Siouxsie Sioux. Ariel also admires artists such as BJORK, who is so otherworldly and unusual but maintains who she is, even through mainstream acceptance. That is something every artist struggles with, it seems. Ariel realizes the odds there are against her alternative route in her music, but does not let that discourage her. She states, "I do not really want to go mainstream with my music as I refuse to be molded and would rather be more underground and unique, than just a carbon copy of everyone else."

She knows that it takes belief and confidence in herself to carry on despite the struggle to be heard in today's industry. Platforms like YouTube, which give artists a sense of independence and freedom to show their art to the masses visually, have been helpful in marketing. It takes a true performer to know your audience, and Ariel has no qualms about sticking to venues that are more accepting of her image and music. She has performed all over from clubs and festivals in Hollywood, to Las Vegas and London (Alternative Music Festival). This summer she will be performing by the ocean in Cornwall at the Faery Festival, which is dedicated to everything ethereal and mystical! This will be her second year performing at the festival, organized by the brilliant visionary Karen Kay. Her favorite thing about performing at the event is watching the children's eyes light up to see a mermaid singing on stage. It is so inspiring for Ariel to see future generations get inspired by her act! Some even ask her if she is a real mermaid! Of course she says YES!

Ariel says, "All I want to do is inspire people with my vision... Becoming a professional mermaid has changed my life because I can sing for other people now and share some magic... And Glitter, don't ever forget the GLITTER!"

Listen to Ariel's Music On



Read Ariel's Poetry On



London native, Ariel Undine, is a 35-year-old singer/songwriter who has been fascinated with the mystery of Mermaids from a very young age. She is musically multi-talented, playing both keytar and keyboards to enhance her music. She has studied dance, photography, animation, set & costume design, and special effects makeup which she has also incorporated into her live shows.

She opens up her more than theatrical stage show with her underwater themed set dressed to perfection: Projectors and fog machines fill the room with the luminous mystery that only deep sea divers experience in the depths of the ocean. She takes the stage dressed from head to toe in Mermaid Couture, complete with her entourage of backup dancers circling around her like sea sirens, calling and pulling her viewers into often dark and dangerous realms. In other scenes, her music is more soft and serene like the gentle caress of the seaside. If there is one thing Ariel Undine is known for, it's her ability to take her audience into another dimension.

Her passion for mer-folk started from birth in Hollywood, California. Coincidentally enough, she was born through water birth and was actually adorned with the name Ariel! Her mother named her after the choir of angels that she heard as she was giving birth and saw a spiritual bright white light.

Ariel was born 40 percent deaf in each ear and used vibrations to connect with music. At the age of 6 she started to draw Mermaids while listening to music. Each new mermaid she drew took on a new shape, form, or color, almost like the frequencies of the musical track she was listening to. She then started to write her own material, poems that eventually turned into musical lyrics, pieced together with rhythm and beats that she would hear like an orchestra in her head. A lot of her songs are featured around fantasy themes such as faeries, unicorns, dragons, mystical creatures, pirates, sea witch, undines, and mermaids.

Her subject matter started to take shape after a very inspiring boat trip to the Catalina Islands. She looked into the water and actually saw dolphins! Her vivid imagination took over, as she dreamt up visions of mermaids swimming along with them. It was as if she could see a doorway into their invisible world. She was so inspired by this experience that she wrote a book called "The Otherworld", which is based on her theories about an invisible dimension underneath the ocean.





"All I want to do is
inspire people with my
vision..."

"And glitter...Don't EVER forget the GLITTER!..."

Q&A With Ariel Undine!

AZ: Mermaids love to hang out on the beach. What are some of your favorite beaches you have visited?

AU: I simply adore Ibiza Spain, I feel very drawn to that place! I have been there many times and I would love to have my own house there one day. I would design an underwater themed house! Also, Malibu is so nice and I would love to go to Hawaii, my dream destination!

AZ: The ocean is a mysterious place. Please tell us some of your favorite sea creatures?

AU: My favorite sea creature is definitely a dolphin, playful and fun. It is my dream to swim with one. I also find jellyfish and sea horses such enchanting little creatures.

AZ: What is your favorite thing about being a mermaid and what is your least?

AU: The best thing about being a mermaid is being able to sing and use my operatic voice to feel close to heaven and angels; it's a very ethereal thing for me. Also, having a tail is a powerful thing underwater; the sleek scales can move fast and furious! I love being in water feeling the freedom of swimming! My least favorite is... well, on stage it's hard to move around as fast as I'd like! Hal

AZ: What are some of your favorite pop culture bits about mermaids? (Movies, music, and books ect.)

AU: SPLASH was my ultimate favorite film as a child; I think her tail was very realistic and the underwater scenes were just magical! I met TAILMAN "TOM SHOUSE", who designed Daryl Hannah's tail and I also met Daryl Hannah in Hollywood. I think I could die a happy mermaid to meet my heroes! He is such an inventive and hardworking man, a real inspiration to making a dream turn into reality and making money from his passion.

AZ: Do you make your own Costumes? If not, where do you get your lovely outfits?

AU: Yes I do make some of my costumes with design concepts that I have, with materials such as Metallic PVC and Spandex. The more complicated costumes are made out of latex by London based genius AMY DAY. She is incredible! I have spent years designing mermaid tails and dresses, but found them hard to maneuver around the stage, so I went to her and she has invented mermaid leggings made of latex with scales! They look very rubbery and fishlike and when the legs are crossed it can be a tail! She is a very inventive lady! Check out her online website [AM STATIK](#).

AZ: Mermaids were always portrayed in fairytales as these mysterious creatures with beautiful hair and make up! What are some of the colors to use in your palette for dressing the part? Do you have any favorite make up brands?

AU: I mostly go for blues and greens. I mix them with different shades of ice blues and light blues on my eyes and dark blue on my lips. I like to match them with the same color wig I wear. I'm not a fan of mixing colors; if I choose blue, it stays blue. I'll also add black eyeliner, lashes, and glitter. Sometimes I'll add a dash of silver when I'm going for a space age, futuristic look. Occasionally I wear purples mixed with blue. If I have a green theme it's the same green wig and a combination of different color greens on my eyes and lips. I love Star Gazer make up, which I have been using for years. I even wrote a song called "Stardust" based on wearing that make up!

AZ: Did you start singing before or after you decided you wanted to be a professional Mermaid?

AU: I always remember singing as a child, but I had a poignant event that I remember very clearly when I was a teenager. It was at festival by the sea in Cornwall, England and I remember singing for a long time in the water. All of the sudden, my voice magically seemed to open up and I could sing high opera ties very well! I never really hit those notes before, so I could not believe it was coming out of me! I remember feeling very inspired. I had a vision of wanting to perform at festivals as a mermaid, emerging from giant shell and an underwater sea themed stage, combining opera and electronica together. I also remember feeling as if the mermaids in the ocean that I was swimming in, gave me a new, more powerful voice! It was a beautiful moment.

AZ: Have you ever been deep-sea scuba diving? If so please share your experience here!

AU: Yes, I actually have a Padi certificate in scuba diving, but my experience was not so nice. I did it in England where even in the summer the water is freezing even with a wetsuit on! Also, the water is murky so I would NOT recommend it! I think if you are going to go scuba diving, go somewhere hot where the marine life is exotic and colorful. Go where you can relax and not worry about freezing your bones off. You can enjoy the variety of fish and creatures so much more; all I saw was a dismal frog on a murky little leaf- that was it! Lol

AZ: Please tell our readers one thing they may not know about Mermaids!

AU: We cry a lot which is why we look younger than our years! Release the poison! Eternal youth and mermaid tears! Mermaids are very emotional creatures. I think part of it is wondering what they are doing here on earth and what their mission is! It can get confusing in human skin! But they have big hearts that feel strongly and when we love, it is so deep that it hurts our soul sometimes. In the human form, we feel every emotion to the extreme and cannot hide it very well. In that respect we are totally honest and what you see is what you get. In retrospect, half the time we are confused by the human race and the other half we are fascinated, but some of the cruel things that humans can do hurt our mer-hearts deeply. We are fiercely loyal to those we love and protect anyone in danger. We are also free spirits! We love our freedom and we cannot be tied down or controlled in any way or we will break free and swim away! We do not always do things that make sense, but what do you expect? We are from another realm, but we will make your life fun, imaginative, mystical, artistic, dreamy, deeply loving, and magical!

AZ: What are some projects you have in the works?

AU: I will be uploading a music video for my song "Seawitch" in the near future, which is about the Medusa inspired myth. The opening lines to the song are, "Hubble-bubble, here comes trouble...Down from the ocean's floor...More like a dark shark, than the girl next door!" The music video will be very dark and mysterious with serpentine elements. It will be set underwater with pirate ships and dead souls of the ocean. It is definitely one of my darker songs with an edge. I am also working on another video for one of my love songs called "CRASH!" The music video will be of me as a sci-fi mermaid, and it will be wild! I cannot wait to shoot it!

AZ: If you ever met a real live mermaid what would you say to her?

"Take me back to your World!"

Thank You So Much! It's been MER-MAGICAL!

-Ariel Undine



MER - JEWELRY BY DEIDRE DREAMS



AZ: What made you want to start making jewelry?

DD: I used to work at a handmade cosmetics shop where I worked my way up from sales assistant to manager and trainer. I was very interested in the creative process of handmade products and the character and quality that comes with that. I always wanted to create products, I was very fascinated by that. One day one of my colleagues came to work and showed me and some other colleagues what she'd been making with polymer clay the day before at home. She had made a charm bracelet with tiny little cookies and ice cream cones. I was instantly smitten with the material! I bought my very first blocks of Fimo that very day and haven't been without a piece of clay in my hand ever since. At first I made what my colleague made, to try it, but after a few days, my hands went in another direction and I started making owls and skulls and embellishing old earrings with a rudimentary version of the flowers I make now. I knew right away that nothing would make me happier than being able to earn my living by making and selling my clay pieces. It took me almost a year to actually go through with that, though. The pieces like my witches, mermaids, and fairies started developing soon after I had started my business.

AZ: What are the materials you use in your jewelry making?

DD: My most important material is polymer clay. I also use a lot of rhinestones that can handle the oven heat that is needed to cure the clay. I often mount my clay cameos on filigrees. I also often combine my clay ornament pieces with crochet and art yarn pieces. I have a very serious yarn addiction! My favorite is hand dyed hand spun yarn. Other than that, I love my millinery flowers and leaves collection for my hats and headdresses, and I love using feathers and beads to embellish as well.

AZ: What is your favorite thing about making jewelry?

DD: My favorite thing is turning the little stories in my head into visual clay pieces and every time the excitement of seeing it takes form and it turns out even better than I'd hoped. Next to that, my greatest passion is color. I love being able to mix any color I want with my clay.

AZ: How long does it take you to make each piece?

DD: That really depends on the piece. The smaller earrings can be done within an hour or two. Pieces like my mermaids can easily take 2 or 3 working days. I don't stop until it feels exactly right to me. My love is in the details. I don't just want a mermaid, I want her to have an actual little world around her and let her background details tell just as much of the story of the little scene as the mermaid herself.

AZ: Your work is very whimsical! Do you take your inspiration from things like books, movies, or music? If so, what are your favorites?

DD: I do take some inspiration from books, movies, music, but it always turns into my own interpretation. I really love fairy tales and making up my own fairy tales.

AZ: What is your favorite fantasy character to create in your work?

DD: Gosh! That is a hard one! I don't think I could choose between my witches, mermaids, and fairies. I love them all equally. I can tell you that my very favorite things to sculpt are mermaids' tails and fairy's wings. And I love being able to give my little ladies skin and hair colors that human beings don't naturally have, like blue or green skin and purple and black streaked hair. I do make sure though that when I give my characters natural skin colors, I don't only make white characters. I make dark skinned characters as well, because I want all my fans to feel represented in my work.

AZ: Do you only make jewelry out of polymer clay, or have you ever made any other things as well?

DD: I love crochet and art yarns. Lately I've discovered needle felting and I love it!! But I always use my clay as well. My clay work is the center of my work.

AZ: What intrigues you about mermaids?

DD: I guess next to always imagining what it would be like to have such a powerful tail and feeling the movement of that body through the water, it is the idea of a creature that is both very alike to us humans but also so very different. I always wonder what it would be like to live in the ocean and I always wonder if there are villages, cities and palaces on the bottom. I also like the idea of mermaids being able to play with such beautiful sea creatures like dolphins, whales, seals and sea horses.

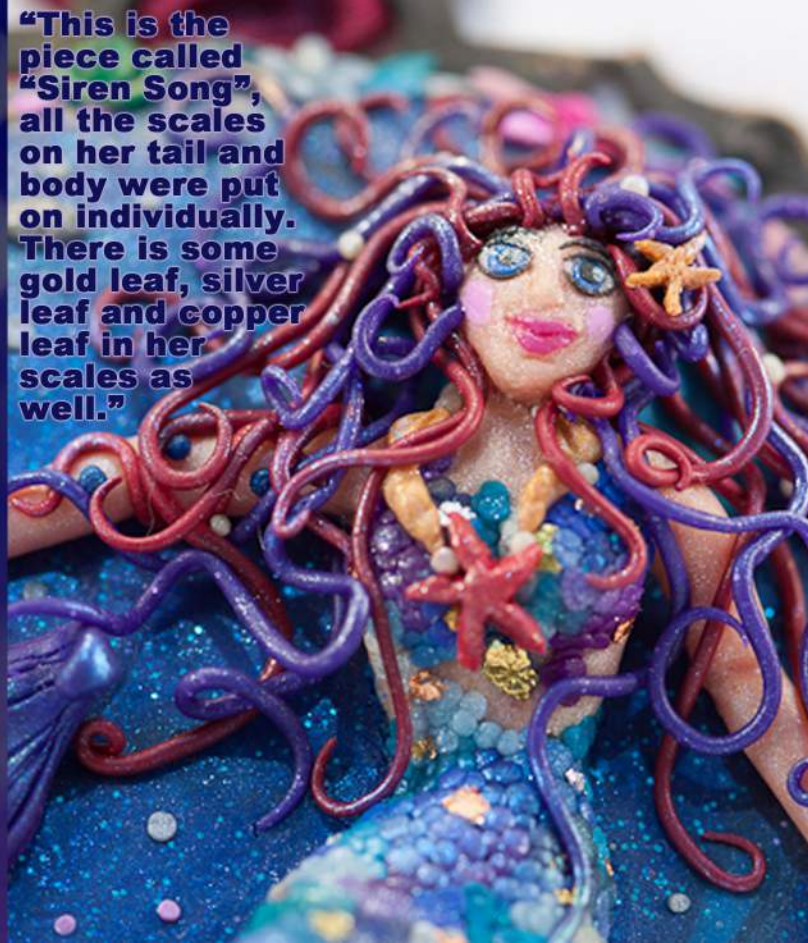
AZ: What would you say to a mermaid, if you were to ever meet one?

DD: I don't know, actually, the first thing that comes to mind right now, is asking whether the pollution of the sea affects their lives a lot.

AZ: If you were a mermaid, what would you want your mermaid name to be?

DD: I really like the name Morwenna (which I already used for one of my mermaid pieces), so I'll go with that one.

"This is the piece called 'Siren Song', all the scales on her tail and body were put on individually. There is some gold leaf, silver leaf and copper leaf in her scales as well."



AZ: Tell our readers a little bit about your jewelry making process!

DD: This also depends on what I'm making. Usually it starts with a vague image in my head when it's a smaller flower piece. Then I go through my clay collection and take out the colors that speak to me at that moment, mix some, if I have to, and just let my hands go. I don't think very much when I make these pieces, I just let my hands and eyes decide what goes where. When it's a large 'story/character' piece like a mermaid, it starts with the almost formed idea of a character and a tiny snapshot moment of her story. Those pieces, I write down and give myself a day or more to mull over, to see what details form in my head. Then I go through my filigree collection to see which one would suit my plans (if I need to, I first patina it in a different color) and make the background. Making the background for a large piece exactly the way I want it, takes a few hours, so I often do that the night before I want to start sculpting, so I don't lose sculpting time during the day. I prefer sculpting in the morning and afternoon, in the daylight, so I don't want to lose too many hours of that making a background. I usually wake up all excited to start my new little lady and when I'm in my zone, I totally lose track of time. I love how pieces of clay become a creature under my hands. I make the little lady first and then I make the details surrounding her.

AZ: Are each of your pieces unique, or would you recreate a piece as a custom order if someone saw something in your gallery that was already sold?

DD: My flower pieces can usually be easily recreated, so can my skully, bat, toadstool, etc-pieces. My character/story pieces are one of a kind pieces. I would take a custom order to kind of recreate a character piece, but I wouldn't be able to make it exactly the same. I don't work with molds, I sculpt freely from what comes out of my hands, so it's never possible to make the face exactly the same or make the hair flow exactly the same, for instance.

AZ: Your jewelry is so bright and colorful! What are your favorite colors to work with?

DD: My favorite color scheme is jewel tones, particularly purple, royal blue, turquoise, teal, and emerald. I also really love fiery and Autumn colors.

Morwenna,
Spirit of the
Shoreline"
Full View



Deidre Gubbles is from a little village in the South of the Netherlands, where she loves to walk through the meadow and watch the seasons change.

Her polymer clay jewelry can be purchased at her official site, www.DeidreDreams.com!

She can also be found on various social media platforms! Most of her collection can be found on her Etsy store. She posts her work progress and news updates on her Facebook page, and she loves to collect visual inspiration on her Pinterest account! Click a logo below to visit Deidre on social media!



"This piece is called "Morwenna, Spirit of the Shoreline", and she is the only mermaid I still have available in the shop, both as a pendant and as a greeting card." (Full View Top Right of Page)

Jewels & Salts of the Sea

by Dena K. Miller

My love for the ocean started in childhood. My dad owned several boats that I pretty much grew up on. Some of my fondest memories are of the ocean on those boats! We sailed to many places from ship to shore. I have to say it was a pretty amazing experience! Now that I am older, my dad no longer has the boats, but going to the beach to visit the ocean is my utmost pleasure! There is something very magical that happens when one walks, particularly alone, on a quiet beach. Just before the day begins as the surf meets the sand, the world seems so vast and I feel so small....not in a self doubting way but in a way that shines with the iridescent gleam of loving gratitude! The sound, the view, and the energy of the miraculously open wide ocean is truly pure MAGIC! As I stare into the vastness, I begin to appreciate even more, all the gifts of the Universe. Most of the time, I will come home with a collection of shells to remind me of those precious gifts! Oh the wonderment of it all....

Yes, the Ocean is Pure Magic!

My love for the ocean has inspired my creativity with my art work. I have created a line of jewelry in which I call "The Mermaid Collection". You can view the new collectin video on YouTube and purchase it as well as my other handmade treasures in my Etsy Store by following the clickable buttons below!



Dena K. Miller is the creative mind and CEO behind Milady Leela Enterprises. She is a mermaid goddess from Pittsburg, PA and aims to inspire others to "Live Beautifully"!

www.MiladyLeela.com



Etsy

BUY THE MERMAID COLLECTION NOW!

UNDERWATER OCEAN GARDEN BATH SALT

(Dena K. Miller Continued)

In addition to my "Mermaid" Jewelry Collection, I also have created a line of bath and body products called "The Secret Garden Collection", some of which are listed in my Etsy Boutique. Recently, I have created a magical "Underwater Ocean Garden" bath salt that any mermaid queen or princess is sure to enjoy. I would love to share my recipe for this ocean inspired bath treat with you.

What you will need:

A Clean Glass Jar
Mixing Containers (2)
Epsom Salt
Course Sea Salt
Colorant
Dried Lavender
Dried or crushed Thyme
Dried or crushed Sage



How to:

1. Mix salts together adding herbs, then separate into two containers.
2. Color one of the salts and leave the other plain.
3. Layer colors in a clean glass jar.
4. Sprinkle more lavender on top and then tightly close jar.
5. Add your own personal decorative style to the jar for completion.

*Providing a scoop makes it extra special if gifting your salt. Be creative and alter this recipe to your own liking to personalize it.

If you choose to keep this love spell for yourself, I know you will enjoy using the Magical Underwater Ocean Garden Bath Salt recipe. I recommend that you take some quiet time. Schedule yourself a bath to reconnect with yourself and the Universe. Brew some tea or pour a glass of wine. Now slip into the warm tub, scented with this heavenly smell of an ocean garden! Breathe and connect yourself with the magic of the ocean.

*Much Love and many Blessings,
Dena K. Miller
aka Milady Leela*



**Click to View My
Blog Post on the
Summer Solstice!**

The Filigree

"A Mythological World
of Handmade Creatures
and Their Stories!"



SEA FOAM &
SILVER MERMAID
wears a delicate
Filigree'd
headpiece from the
Sea made
of silvery
seaweed, a
starfish and
shell.



The Filigree Company is a mythological world of handmade creatures and their stories! The Nashville, TN based company was started up by a husband & wife team, Celena Cavala and Martin Obakke in 2009. They borrow their company name from the beautiful intricate jewelry style, much like metal lace or a decorative spider web. They LOVE to weave things together, be it stories, dolls, art, etc., to create a piece that is unique.

Martin does the sculpting and the beautifully detailed illustrations, while Celena does the clothing and writes the stories. They come up with their concepts together; Martin sketches a scene based on ideas (color schemes, concepts, sizes), while Celena will sew the dresses and body. After these processes are completed, the doll is then assembled. The sculpted parts are made of polymer clay with a delicate silk overlay and soldered copper. Celena likes to use light, airy, natural fabrics such as silk and cotton voiles, which she then dyes. She usually makes the clothing but sometimes Martin will sculpt little silken jackets and other embellishments. They'll then take their fancy portraits to display on their Facebook page for their ever growing fan base, which has expanded globally!

Each doll takes about two days to complete, unless it's a brand new concept they are working up. The dolls range in size from mainly about 7 inches to 14 inches, however they have made smaller and *much* larger ones as well. All of the hard work and handcrafting that goes into each and every unique piece justifies the \$200-\$600 price range, depending on the size and amount of work that goes into each doll.

The couple take their inspiration from mythological tales, nature, storytellers, and even fashion. They immerse themselves in the art of storytelling which is what draws them to create items in the fantasy realm. They have a love for paying attention to detail, which they love to explore while creating. They look to many of their favorite artists, who they feel have shaped their personal artistic style, such as Kai Nielsen, Arthur Rackham, and Daniel Merriam more currently. They marvel at the styles of Art Nouveau, Pre-Raphaelite, and a dash of Pop Surrealism. They mix that with a little bit of old school fairy tale and sprinkle the rest with some modern influences to get their extremely unique end product.

Even though doll making seems to be their main gig, this duo has their hands in many other creative areas of their business! Martin also illustrates for their clothing line, Carousel Ink which according to their site, is a whirlwind of "Carnival Nights, Steampunk Dreams, and a Menagerie of Fantasy". They specialize in bringing fairytale imagery to modern apparel. They also sell prints of Martin's Illustrations in their ETSY print shop! Many of the preliminary doll sketches are included as special one of a kind prints with the dolls but not available for sale. They have also written 7 fairytale newspapers filled to the brim with stories and illustrations and have also dabbled in creating children's stories as well, which they plan to continue in the future!

Click for more info!



VISIT OUR
PRINT SHOP
CLICK HERE!

WWW.THEFILIGREE.COM



PARAMEE~
WATER LILY
RIVER MERMAID
is a large Filigree
Doll standing at
*12½*in. tall
- 4 in wide



Works in progress!

Martin's hard at work on some foreigner dolls!



Q&A with Celena

AZ: What are some of your favorite things in pop culture that are mermaid related?

CC: Well, Splash of course! Viva Madison! Martin comes from the land of 'The Little Mermaid' (Denmark) so mermaids are omnipresent.

AZ: Why do you think mermaids are so intriguing to people?

CC: People desire to explore hidden realms and nothing is more mysterious than the depths of the ocean! Water is a dreamy sense of flying, so having a tail and the ability to breathe under water would be like having wings.

AZ: Have you ever dabbled in stop animation? Your dolls have that sort of style to them!

CC: Just for fun! That is an enormous undertaking that would be a large production.

AZ: If you were a mermaid, what would your mermaid name be?

CC: I am a mermaid and my name is Celena, pleased to meet you! :)

Filigree'd Carousel
Seahorse stands
12½ in. tall,
(Seahorse is 6½ in
tall) and 4 inches
wide with base.
Fashioned from silk,
copper, and
polymer clay.

Ocean View of the New Age

SMARTPHONE ART

with Laura Flashberg



"Ocean Grove"
by Laura Flashberg

When looking at New Jersey native Laura Flashberg's "Ocean Grove" piece, it is hard to tell exactly whether it is a painting or a photo! Today she joins Abra-zine! to set the record straight and also chats with us about the great advantages that photographers of the new digital age have, thanks to the "Smart Phone".

I was born in 1950 and raised in the Bayway section of Elizabeth, New Jersey which was an interesting place to grow up. I briefly lived in Chicago, Illinois, which was a great city but very different than life here in my High Bridge, New Jersey home. I did experience a bit of culture shock when I moved here!

My interest in Art started when I was a little girl. I'm obsessed with many forms of Art such as Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism, Avant-Garde, or just anything that is left of center. I also love music, dance, and film mediums. I am most fascinated with the process of how the imagination works in usage of color, lines, space, and the meaning of a piece of work. Sewing was my first creative outlet, but I cannot follow patterns, so I make up everything I sew and now crochet. I also make jewelry from different materials such as wire, clay, fabric and yarn. Another love I have is writing children's stories. Two books are completed, but not published, and one of my stories for young adults has been published in a collection for a local author. Though I have many hobbies, photography remains the one passion that I do on a daily basis!

I have been shooting since the mid 80s. My first camera was a Ricoh with interchangeable lenses and then 2 Nikons. I shot with film and had them processed into slides and pictures. I never liked schlepping all of the lenses and cameras so I was happy to discover smart phones that also take pictures! I purchased a Blackberry which gave me great results!

I couldn't work with lenses, so I was limited. A friend had an iPhone and I saw the quality of the pictures it took. I was hooked! My next phone was an iPhone which opened up a whole new world of possibilities! Apps (abr. for "Applications") can be downloaded and then the fun begins! There are apps that are just like a darkroom without the messy chemicals! There are a few lenses that are available for the iPhone camera, so that will be my next purchase. I am also looking to purchase a digital camera with interchangeable lenses for more versatility; the manufacturers have made models in compact sizes. The easy access and portability are the reasons I only use my phone to take pictures these days.

This picture I chose to display in this issue was taken on the beach in Ocean Grove, New Jersey with my iPhone 5. The inspiration of this photo was from the depth of the fence in relation to the house structure, and also the light.



"I never gave mermaids any thought or credence, but due to the theme of this magazine issue, I have given the subject much more thought and reading. My conclusion is that mermaids are a product of hallucinations or visionary experiences of men who spent an undue amount of time on ships or boats. They are great topics of folklore and wonderful fantasy figures for children's books, stories, film, and fun figures for the imagination!"

To Left: Smartphone junkie, Laura Flashberg takes a selfie with her iPhone 5!

Laura is currently working on new illustrations for a children's book she wrote and is trying to get her website up and running!

Legendary Adventures at Sea!

By Justina Carubia

AHOY FELLOW SCALLYWAGS! I had always wondered what it would have been like to be a pirate, sailing across the 7 seas, looking for sunken treasures and maps to secret islands, meeting different sea creatures and furry/feathery island friends along the way! This past end of April, early May, I had the opportunity to experience some of the very things every aspiring pirate dreams about! My boyfriend Avi and I had sailed aboard the Carnival LEGEND, on a cruise around the West Caribbean. We had adventures that only a storyteller can pass down, for generations to come! My best friend Kristin works on the ship as a dancer in the shows on board, so it was great to experience her life at sea for a week! She is the true pirate in this situation here. We also spent the days on board getting to know her Hungarian boyfriend David, who supplies the ship's guests with his bartending services! Yo Ho Ho, I had PLENTY of rum on this trip! Thanks David!

So on with our journey, I don't mean to bore you with minute details which I could easily get wrapped up in. I think I really took "Carpe Diem" to a whole new level with this trip. I really put myself out there and voluntarily participated in things I never would have been brave enough to do, otherwise.

We flew from New Jersey to Tampa, Florida where we embarked on our amazing 7 day journey. The first night we had a nice dinner in the dining room and saw Kristin's first show, "Motor City" which was a collection of all Motown Songs! It was wonderful! The next whole day was spent at sea where we indulged on many Miami Vices (half pina colada, half strawberry daiquiri frozen drinks). We spent most of this day at the saltwater pool on board, and also explored the ship a bit more. Avi had never been on a cruise before so it was great to enjoy the views of the open ocean alongside of him. We really marveled at how mysterious open water really is. There could be ANYTHING out there... It really is such a scary and wondrous place. We kept our eyes peeled for any dolphin, whale, or even mermaid sightings! But no such luck... We went to bed in our little cabin that evening, looking forward to the start of our excursions that would take place over the next few days!



THE ANCIENT RUINS OF TULUM (COZUMEL, MEXICO)

Day 3 we docked at the port in Cozumel, Mexico. We took a tender to the shore of Cozumel, which was about a 45 minute ride, choppy as ever!! If there is one thing REAL Pirates don't get, it's seasick! And boy was I ever! A nice stranger gave me some mint gum to settle my stomach as we got off. Avi and I enjoyed the air conditioned bus ride, as we listened to our very informative guide, Angel, talk about the Ancient Mayan Ruins of Tulum. He told us about the Obsidian, which is naturally formed volcanic glass that was found on the bottom of the ocean. It turns a gold hue when placed in the light. The ancient Mayans, the REAL LIFE MERMAIDS, would free dive, holding their breath into the depths of the ocean to chisel off this Obsidian and bring it back to use in everyday rituals, or in making tools, spears, etc. for survival.

The Mayans relied heavily on nature to give them the answers, the secrets to life. They relied on the sun, the moon, the stars, and Mother Earth to build their empire. They were the most technologically advanced civilization for their time, and when the Spaniards invaded the Yucatan, they sadly tried to destroy most of the Mayan culture. Angel also made sure that he made the distinction that the Mayans and the Aztecs were in no way shape or form related, as Hollywood and American Stereotypes have brainwashed us to think. They actually did not even exist within the same time period, the Mayans establishing their civilization around 2000 BC and ruling their empire until the Spaniards arrived around 900 AD, where the Aztecs did not even establish their empire until about 1400 AD.

There were many interesting facts that Angel enlightened us about, especially with the cuisine. In the Yucatan, burritos do not exist because they don't have access to livestock such as cattle or pig, like they do in Northern Mexico. In the Yucatan, they feed mostly on fish & other seafood. Also, tacos here were flat, and soft shelled. If you wanted a taco shell here, it is actually called a Tostada. They season their seafood tacos with fresh ingredients like lemon or lime, garlic, cilantro, and fresh salsa that they called "Ay Ay Ay"! This "Ay Ay Ay" salsa contained 10 habanero peppers for every 1 tomato, NOW THAT'S HOT!

We also learned that the hammock is the bed of the Yucatan, since the swinging motion simulates a breeze in the conditions of extreme heat and humidity. Angel also stopped at other things along the way like ginormous ant hives in trees. Since the ground is filled with water, the ants had to adapt to new habitats off of the ground.

[click here to view my tulum bonus video playlist!](#)



We just hanging on the rocks with some iguanas!

We also spotted some wild guati, which looks like a weird combination of a monkey, raccoon, and ardvark or anteater. Before we got to the ruins, we also stopped along some large trees which the Mayans used for many things. They believed that the spirits of the dead would pass through these trees into other worlds because of how hollow it was. They also used the hollow trees as drums as music was a huge part of ancient ceremony. Since the ground is rich in limestone, the trees would absorb a lot of the water into the base, so this was another way the Mayans would use nature in their survival. The leaves would also produce cotton, which is how they made their linens. They really found uses for everything around them.

We finally came to the area of the ruins which were just beyond breathtaking. There were iguanas and large lizards everywhere you turned, but they didn't bother you if you didn't bother them. These ruins overlooked a white sand beach that lead out to beautiful crystal clear blue waters!! It was unfortunately closed this day due to high tide, so we couldn't go down and explore. Anyway, the ruins were built in such a way that allowed them to withstand the conditions of erosion over time. They were built at an angle which allowed ocean water, wind, and other precipitation to just go in one direction and roll right off rather than sit on the ruins and destroy things faster. This trip was just a wealth of information that is hard to come by here in the brainwashed & misinformed USA.

Angel himself is of Mayan heritage and told us things that are not commercially advertised properly here in the US. We see so many stereotypes here, and he really made it his #1 priority to open our eyes to the truth of the Mayan culture & history. He also told us that this tour was the least popular excursion of all of the excursions that Carnival has to offer. It saddened Avi and I, because most people go on these cruises to just sit on a beach all day. I think that's what separates vacationers from travelers. We were the Scallywags in this case, seeking out adventure in learning more about this ancient rich culture! When you go to a new place, try to learn about the CULTURE! Sure beaches are nice, but you can do that anywhere! I am SO grateful for my experience at the Ancient Ruins of Tulum in Cozumel, Mexico.

Avi and I, overlooking the beautiful white sand beach!



Our tour guide, Angel, educating us about Obsidian, a staple in the Mayan Culture!



High tide on the beach, we couldn't go down :-)



Me Posing at the Ancient Ruins of Tulum! So beautiful it looks fake!



Ginormous ant hive in the trees!



Our lunch: Authentic Yucatan Fish Tacos, Lime Rice, & Refried Beans con Ay Ay Ay!



Avi posing in front of the ruins...



BELIZE

Day 4, our adventures were in Belize! This place was probably the most adventurous due to the physical activities that we chose to take part in this day! We went zip lining through the jungles and cave tubing! I was extremely nervous about the zip lining, but we'll get to that in a sec. The ship didn't dock here, but anchored, so we had to take a tender to shore. It was maybe a 15 minute ride and I was able to keep my nausea in check. We then took a bus ride from the shore to the theme park which was a little over an hour long. Our tour guide, Niori was a nice Belizian guy who informed us that our time with him would be in fact "UN-BELIZE-ABLE!" He also gave us a little insight to the culture on this rather new independent nation.

Belize used to be the Republic of Honduras, under British rule until about 1983 or so. The main dialect on the island is not French Kriol, but Belizian Kriol. The phrase of the trip was "YAH MAN!" Upon pulling out of the bus station we drove through the streets of Belize City, in which Niori told us that there are only 7 traffic lights on the whole island of Belize, and only 6 of them work. That was assuring! There is also only one cinema and one bowling alley on the whole island. Currency in Belize is double the USD, so gas prices there are about \$12, which is about \$6 a gallon, USD. We should feel lucky things for us here are still hovering below the \$4 mark (well, in Jersey anyway). On this bus ride we also passed a school, and a cemetery in which the tombs were oddly above ground. Niori explained to us that this was because if you dig past 3 feet underground you hit water. So in the case of a husband and wife being buried together, the first person was buried 3 feet underground, and then the second person was just placed on top of the ground, to equal 6 feet. Belize is also known for its export of tropical produce such as mangos, oranges, pineapples, coconuts, etc. He said about 97% of the oranges found in Florida orange juices comes from Belize. Do not believe the 100% Florida Oranges Labels! He also explained why cashews are so expensive here in the US! They are one of the most dangerous nuts to harvest. Cashews actually grow in a fruit, which looks like a cross between a red bell pepper and an apple. The nut rests on top. You can not eat the fruit because it is highly toxic. In order to extract the nut from the fruit and dry them, they must take them out into a field and burn them which produces a chemical so potent that it could blind you! This dangerous process is why we pay so much for these nuts! We take for granted the things we have no idea went into making such a small tin of nuts.

As we indulged on all of this information, we made our way into a more rural area of the island. In the distance, we could see a mountain range that locals call "The Sleeping Giant". It looks like the profile of a large man's head lying face up. Niori said that's where we were headed, and to be aware, for the place we were going to be inhabiting for the afternoon was called Jaguar Paw Park, and that actual Jaguars do live there! They do not believe in restricting their wildlife from where they want to go, just for the sake of tourism, but he did assure us that they would see us, before we saw them, and they would actually avoid us. Trust me, this did not put my mind at ease one bit!! I just tried to ignore this information and enjoy the day. The park was actually quite lovely, and I did feel safe there. There were multiple tour groups here so Niori decided to give us a code name so we knew when we had to meet up throughout the day. He called us Niori's Legendary Crazy Cashew Nuts, and we would respond with a "YAH MAN!" Avi and I suited up into our zipline gear (which was pretty heavy) and hiked about a half mile uphill into the Belizian jungle to our safety briefing with a little island man named Richard! After that, we walked more and got in line on a staircase leading up to a platform high in the trees.

I was shaking in anxious anticipation as we waited in line to do the first line (which was the longest, and highest, at about 200 ft). Yea, cuz that's not scary! The workers would yelp like monkeys across the way to the guy at the other end of the line, to let them know when they were ready for the next victim. I went ahead of Avi, and he filmed my first zip line. The look on my face was definitely one of uncertainty, but ultimately you could hear the relief in my "WOOHOO!" as I ascended into the jungle at lightning speed. The wind rushed past my body as I floated upon the canopy of palms, ferns, and mahogany trees which are native to this land. I remember doing what they tell you not to do, which was looking down! I WANTED to see how high I was, to seize just how adventurous this whole experience actually was. As I made it to the other side, Avi close behind me, I felt all of the adrenaline rush out of me, totally stoked that there were 4 more lines to come! This was by far one of the most adventurous things I have ever done.

After the zip line, we had regrouped with Niori before being sent off with our cave tubing guide, Peter. We got on our water shoes, lifejackets, and light helmets with neon green inflatable tubes in hand, as we trudged up another mountain toward the caves. Peter stopped every now and then at different trees marked with signs to identify them. We saw Mahogany Trees, Prickly Yellows, Cotton Trees, and Coconut Trees. We finally arrived to the clearing, the entrance of the cave which was surrounded by lush greenery and fresh water filled with tiny little clear harmless minnows. There were about 10 people in our group, 2 people per row, all hooked together by putting their legs under the person's armpit in front of them. Avi and I were placed in the back so it was a bit hard to hear our tour guide with about 5 other tours going on in front and behind us. Even if you whisper in a cave, the sound just bounces around, so all it sounded like was a trail of echoes. I got a few bits of information, like the red deposits on the ceiling were iron, and there were also limestone deposits. Also the Mayans used to come into these caves to perform sacred rituals. There was also a section of the cave that was exposed to light, due to a sinkhole that had collapsed the earth where that part of the cave was. The water in the cave was shallow for the most part, but went up to 40 feet deep in some parts. I did witness a fruit bat flying through the cave upon entering. They live in the holes of the cave ceiling and eat up to 1000 insects per hour.

The cave tubing was fun, but the zip lining totally took the cake here. We headed back to the lockers, put some dry clothes on, and headed to the bar for some grub before heading back to the ship. We feasted upon some delicious authentic Belizian cuisine, stewed chicken, rice & beans, and cole slaw. Avi also got us some chicken tacos and we washed it all down with some cold Belikins, The Beer of Belize. After, we hit the gift shop and then boarded the bus to head back to the port. We had a wonderful time here, and we left with great knowledge of this beautiful island. Niori taught us one more phrase to take home, when asked where we went on our adventures, we should say in Belizian Kriol "Ahm be gone, ahm Belize!"

view my belize bonus
video playlist here!
it's un-belize-able!



Avi and I suited up in our zipline gear and ready to go!



Our safety briefing with our instructor, Richard.



Chowing on some Belizian Cuisine, Chicken Tacos!



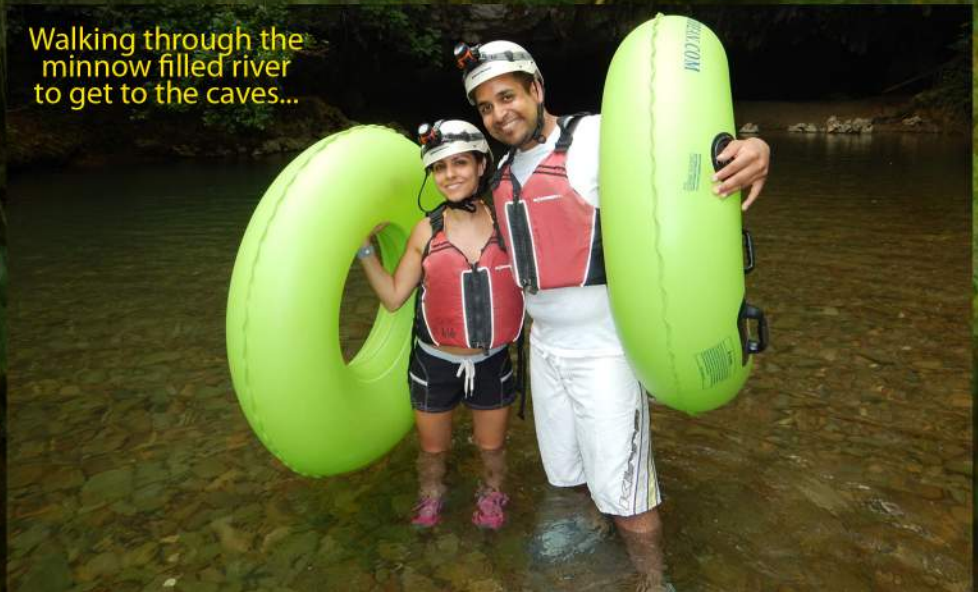
...And Stewed Chicken, Rice n Beans, & Cole Slaw!



Drifting through the dark caves!



Watch out for that low flying bat, Avi!



Walking through the minnow filled river to get to the caves...



Beautiful panoramic shot of the cave



Roatan, Honduras



The first thing you notice when waking up in the port of Roatan, is the huge abandoned ship which has rusted over and partially sunken into the bed of the ocean. It looks like something out of a movie set, like it had been placed there for tourists to get a kick out of. Upon exiting the ship at the port in Roatan, everything seemed like a big party. There were islanders banging on drums and dancing around to the tribal grooves, pulling in tourists to dance with them. They danced like they were conjuring up spirits, or ridding their bodies of evil forces. On this day, we enjoyed our excursion along with my friend Kristin, her mom Jackie, Jackie's friend Cheryl, and Kristin's boyfriend David. We found our tour bus shortly after watching the dancing fiasco.

We were greeted by our tour guide, Joy. She was very funny and knowledgeable about the island. The first thing she mentioned was the abandoned ship that we saw earlier, and informed us that it was actually a Carnival Cruise Ship that never made it back home. After she scared the wits out of all the bus passengers, she relieved us with "JUST KIDDING GUYS!" and proceeded to tell us the real history behind the ship. It was actually a cargo ship that got pushed into the bay and sunk during Hurricane Mitch in the 90s. As we zipped through the narrow twisting and turning roads of the island, Joy also told us that there were no speed limits in Honduras, and that STOP signs are merely suggestions. That put us all at ease as well! These tour guides really like to keep you on your toes!

We also learned some pretty interesting information pertaining to the lifestyle here. Teachers actually make more than doctors, and the highest paying salary you can get in Honduras is about \$200 a month flat rate, no overtime. She also pointed out the colorful houses throughout the island and informed us that instead of delivering the mail according to house number, they deliver it according to the color combinations. No two houses have the same roof and house color combination. I also noticed many little Coca-Cola and Pepsi stands on the island. We must have driven by at least 20 of them. She also talked about some of the wildlife here including the Rabbit of Roatan, which she made clear was not like the cute little white fluffy tailed hippity hoppity creatures that we were used to back home in the states. She referred to the rabbits of the island here as "Rabbits on Steroids", and then said, "You'll See". GREAT!!

We soon arrived at Gumbalimba Park which was named after the Gumbalimba Tree. We ventured to Gumbalimba to explore various tropical wildlife such as parrots and capuchin monkeys. Before we could see these beautiful animals, we had to experience a little adventure first!

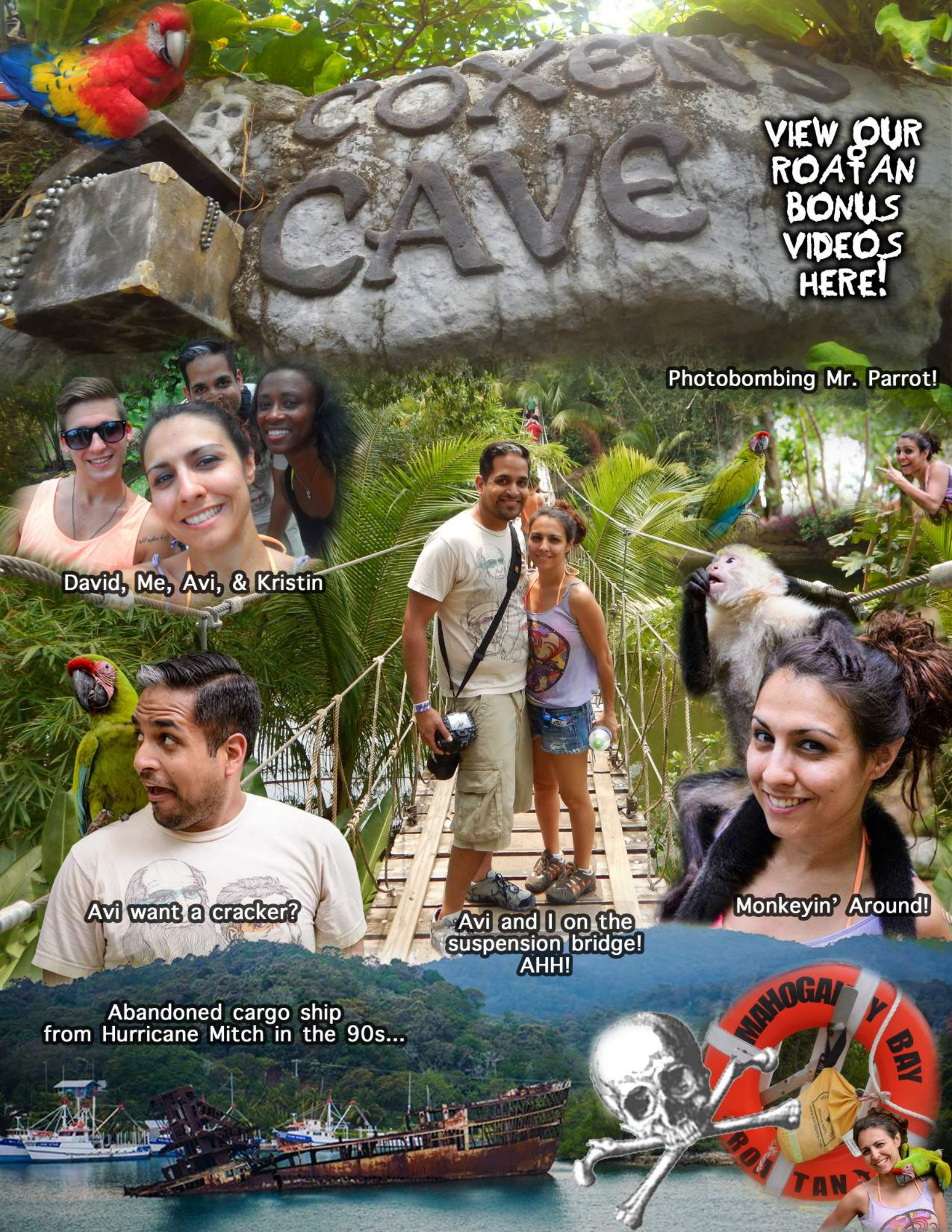
There was a replica cave dedicated to Pirate Captain John Coxen which we walked through for a short tour. Being that this was a man made cave, I was not expecting it to be inhabited by low flying fruit bats. I had to scream and duck for cover at least twice, giving the less skiddish quite the laugh. We learned a bit about Captain John Coxen here, who was a pirate infamously known for raiding the Gulf of Honduras. He also had an eyepatch and a hook on his hand, which legend has it, a mosquito was flying around his face, and forgetting that he had a hook for a hand, swatted the bug out of the way, and in turn, gauged out his eye. I am not sure how entirely true this legend is, I can't seem to find much about this guy on the internet referring to his hook hand, patched eye, or pegged leg.

After the cave replica, we proceeded across a suspension bridge which stretched out across a murky river filled with turtles. I think we had the most fun on here, and I had flashbacks of my favorite scene in Indiana Jones's "Temple of Doom". We took our time walking across, as it didn't take much for the bridge to start swinging. We finally made it across and didn't realize that Joy was already waiting for us on the other side. There was an alternate, much faster route called "The Chicken Path" for those who were too nervous to cross the suspension bridge. She led us to an area with beautiful Amazon parrots and McCaws resting freely amongst the trees. There was a bird trainer also holding a Green Amazon parrot, allowing people to take their pictures with them. Everyone in our group had lots of fun with this. I allowed the heavy bird to sit on my left shoulder as it squawked ever so loudly in my ear. I've owned birds before, little cockatiels, but this was horse...errr... bird of a different color.

After we had fun with the crazy birds, Joy regrouped us and kind of reminded us about the rules and regulations when dealing with the monkeys. We had bought a locker so I didn't have to bring in any of the bags, because apparently these little guys are quite the pick-pocketers! We were also instructed to leave our water bottles on the benches off to the side while we played with the monkeys. On the way into the monkey reserve, we heard rustling in the bushes. All of the sudden there were these two crazy guinea pig looking animals who were running at at least 25 miles an hour after each other, not even acknowledging the humans in their path. These were the Steroid Bunnies as Joy liked to call them. They really minded their own, but crazy they were indeed! The experience with the monkeys definitely was not long enough. I really wish I could have spent my whole time at this park, in this section. There were also about 30 other people in this section at one time, so your time with your monkey, IF they even came over to you, was pretty abrupt.

The monkeys were allowed to roam here freely, jumping on whoever they deemed interesting at any given moment. There were cute little baby ones and larger adult ones all mixed together. I had some time with about two different monkeys for a few minutes each. They would sit on my shoulder, and climb on my head, resting their human like little fingers on my forehead. The personality they all have is hilarious, and it's crazy how intelligent they are. So intelligent in fact that one of them saw our water bottle over on the bench and must have mistaken it for a toilet bowl because it decided to spray feces all over it! GROSS INDEED! We definitely chuckled that right way! On the way back to the park's entrance area we stopped at the Insectarium and Bug Museum which was just a little shack containing thousands of dried species of bugs in glass display cases. There were literally thousands of moths, beetles, roaches, butterflies, filling up each wall with their scientific names next to each.

After we were done here, it was time to head back to the main area to wait for our bus and collect some souvenirs. I bought a cute pair of monkey earrings made from the wood of a coconut tree, a bracelet, and a couple pocket knives in resin cases made from mahogany trees, all from a nice merchant lady. We then were picked up by our shuttle van that was more than scary, twisting and turning once more through the hills of Roatan as it rushed us back to the port to meet our ship. Every day on this trip, was one adventure after the next!



COXEN'S CAVE

VIEW OUR
ROASTAN
BONUS
VIDEOS
HERE!

Photobombing Mr. Parrot!

David, Me, Avi, & Kristin

Avi want a cracker?

Avi and I on the
suspension bridge!
AHH!

Monkeyin' Around!

Abandoned cargo ship
from Hurricane Mitch in the 90s...



GRAND CAYMAN ISLANDS



Day 6 was in the Grand Cayman Islands where we had plans to visit a turtle and dolphin park. I was pretty excited to be able to interact with aquatic animals! I did a dolphin interaction experience when I was about 9 years old in Cancun, Mexico, but I think I was too young to really appreciate it. I also was not brave enough. I actually remember clinging to my mother and getting a bit of anxiety over it. I had never experienced being around any sort of exotic animal that young in life, so I was pretty excited to be able to do it again as an adult and kind of redeem myself here. First of all, Grand Cayman was by far the most BEAUTIFUL stop on this trip, and definitely the wealthiest. There were 5 star hotels and resorts all around the island, not to mention the most tourist friendly, with fast food chains every few miles. The boat actually anchored in the ocean at this stop, so we had to take about a 15 minute tender to the docks. Right outside the docks there was a main street filled with nice restaurants, gift shops, trendy galleries, and Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville. I feel like there's one of those everywhere, hahaha!

So the turtle/dolphin park was about a 20-30 minute drive from the docks. I was pretty groggy on the way there because I had popped a Dramamine tablet in fear of more nausea ruining my day. Had I known the tender ride was so short, I probably would not have done that. Anyway, we got to the park, and were directed to the turtle portion first. It was so amazing to see the sea turtles, which swam in large clusters in the saltwater pool. You could hear the clacking of their shells as they simulated bumper car motions into each other to get to the food that was dropped in, before their friends got to it. You could purchase turtle food to feed them, but we did not. I did not have to feed a turtle to validate my experience here, things are never cheap at these places. I just had a great time observing them from over the balcony, their shells glistening and reflecting the sunlight off the water. It was fun to watch and listen to them as they came up for air, peaking their tiny little heads out of the water, letting out an enormous gasp, sucking all the air back in for the next dive. Turtles can spend long durations underwater and surface only to breathe for about 1 - 3 seconds before going back under. They can replace the air in their lungs in one single breath! Green Sea Turtles have been known to swim up to 35 mph, and males are known to spend their entire lives at sea, rarely, if ever, returning to land. The only two predators the turtle really has to worry about are sharks, and humans, as turtle meat actually remains a traditional dish on the island today, but I will get to that in a little bit!

We roamed the giant sea turtle area for a bit, and even passed by the tank of Smiley, the island's only living crocodile since the mid-1950s. When they captured her in 2008, they ran DNA testing to discover that she was actually a hybrid between two different species of crocodile. Smiley is a 9 foot Saltwater Crocodile, but can survive in both salt and fresh water. This day it was rather hot, and she was hiding under huge palm leaves, so we didn't stop here for too long. We soon made our way to the baby turtle wading pool. This was the part I was so excited about and it even gave us a chance to use Avi's new water cam! We had so much fun with these little guys, I really wish that we got to spend more time with them. They only allowed about 4 people in the pool with them at once, so things felt a bit rushed here. We got to pick them up though, by their shell only, and take some photos with them. Their shells felt so smooth, and were decorated beautifully in different patterns. They also had beautiful patterns on their flapper fins and on their heads. The one I picked up was pretty timid, but the one Avi picked up was rather opinionated! It flapped its little flippers in a fit of range during the duration of our picture taking, until he was put back in the water. After exiting the pool, we washed off our hands and feet at the sanitization station, because turtles and other reptiles have been known to spread Salmonella and other bacterial diseases. Always sanitize after handling reptiles & amphibians!

After our time at the turtle park, we headed over to Dolphin Discovery. I was pretty excited to get some footage of us with the dolphins but the park would not allow us to take in our own camera, even though it was a water camera. It was actually a load of bs, so we had to pay an obscene amount of money for subpar pictures that were taken by their staff... but hey, it worked, so who are the suckers here? I refused to go home without some snapshots of my experience with these wondrous creatures. So back to the actual experience. We suited up in our life vests and followed the photographer staff woman toward the pool we were to enter after the "OK" from our dolphin trainer. We all entered the pool in a single file line; there was a Russian family of 4 in front of Avi and I, then behind us there was another family of 4.

We all entered the pool and stood on the platform as our dolphin trainer introduced himself as Luis. The dolphin that we got to interact with today was Galileo, and he had such a funny personality! Luis would entertain us with some tricks; we would hold our hands out in front of us, and Galileo would start at the front of the line and swim past everyone so we got to run our hands across his cartilage like body & fins. Then he would roll over and come back the other way so we got to do the same to feel his belly. We did this a few times here and there. In between tricks, Luis would enlighten us with more information about dolphins. Like how their fins act as a fingerprint; all dolphins have different series and patterns of ridges on their dorsal fin, which is the fin that stands up on their back. The sound that they make also comes out of their blowholes which they also breathe out of. Dolphins do have sharp little teeth mostly used to catch fish, but not to chew them. They swallow their food whole and can consume up to 30 pounds of food a day.

Dolphins can swim up to 25 mph, which Luis proved when he had Galileo do some diving tricks. One minute the dolphin was in the air, and faster than you can blink, as soon as it hit the water again, it was right back across the pool at Luis's hand for a fishy treat! He did leaps and dives, jumping 20 feet into the air, splashing all of us below! We also did some individual tricks; each one of us got to step out slap our hand on the water and Galileo would swim up to our other hand in the air and touch his nose to it. Then we would put our arms out to his fins and he would lift himself halfway out of the water and use his strong tail to balance and dance with us. This was the cutest trick: we would hold our hands out in a cupped position and when Luis gave him the signal, he would swim over to us, lift his bottled nose and place it into our hands. We would then pucker up for a dolphin kiss and a photo opp. After my turn, Luis asked if Galileo enjoyed it, and he let out a series of high pitched squeals and squeaks with his head nodding a "yes" motion. Everyone got a laugh out of that!

They really are such playful animals, and as much as I had fun interacting with them in this park that enabled us to, it also made me very sad to see such wondrous creatures in captivity. However, Luis insisted that these dolphins survive longer in these parks which act more like conservatories. Apparently, it is hard for dolphins to find a sufficient amount of food in the wild to allow them to live as long as they should, and also they are hunted by sharks or harmed by human conditions. Before our time was up with them, we got to do a few more belly rubs and even throw a piece of fish into Galileo's mouth.

After we finished in the dolphin pool, we did some souvenir shopping and then headed to our bus stop which would take us back to the main strip by the port. While we were waiting, our new friend Courtney who we met on the crazy Cozumel tender, had started up a conversation with Avi regarding how we enjoyed our experience here. She then proceeded to tell us that her and her mother who was standing beside her, were going to check out a restaurant who served this island delicacy of Turtle Burgers. Avi, not really thinking I would go for this asked me, "Would you wanna go eat turtle burgers with them?" I thought about it for maybe a few seconds and though "When in Rome..." I mean, WHY NOT!? When is the next time I'm going to have this adventure? NEVER! Yes, I may have other adventures, but not this same one, right here, right NOW.

So Avi and I took them up on the offer, and joined them at the Paradise Restaurant for some turtle burgers, rice n' beans, and some locally brewed beer. I also spotted some TURTLE SOUP on the menu, which I had asked my cousin Danielle about in our last issue's travel piece about her trip to the Galapagos. She had never had it, but I was determined to find out for myself what this had tasted like! Curiosity had definitely gotten the best of me on this trip, and I was gung-ho about every experience! So Avi and I sunk our teeth into the turtle goodness. Many people ask what it tastes like, and let me just say, I would definitely eat it again. The burgers were a nice reddish crisp on the outside, and the inside texture was somewhat of a slightly undercooked meatloaf. It definitely did not taste like chop meat, but it didn't taste like raw meat either; it was somewhere oddly in between. Courtney and her mom also joked how we must have been just as twisted as them to be playing with cute little baby turtles in a wading pool one minute, and then scarfing them down on a burger bun the next. (Not the same turtles we held, cuz THAT would just be way too weird!) :-P

Avi and I in the baby turtle wading pool.



Chowin on a turtle burger. When in Rome!

Paradise Restaurant:
Famous for their turtle
burgers!

Galileo and I smiling
for the camera!



This was the last excursion day we had. We spent the last whole day at sea doing activities around the ship, and lying out on the top deck for some last minute sun. As Avi and I stood at the balcony overlooking the large wake being left behind by our enormous ship, we spotted two little fish jumping in and out of the waves. They jumped a couple times, and as we looked closer, we noticed they were dolphins! Beautiful magical, mystical, WILD dolphins. Not in captivity.... free to roam the seas that they belong in! It reminded me that the ocean really is such a mysterious and beautiful place. It can be a very scary place, it can swallow you whole in an instant... but it is also a place that should be marveled at for all of its natural beauty. It was the perfect ending to such an amazing adventure I will forever cherish in my box of memories. We looked onto the horizon, and we were on our way home...

VIEW OUR GRAND CAYMAN
BONUS VIDEOS HERE!



Grumpy Sea Turtle
coming up for air!

Q&A WITH REAL LIFE MERMAID! Lily-Rose Sheppard

AZ: So what exactly is your connection to mermaids and how do you apply the mermaid lifestyle to your everyday life?

LRS: Ever since I was a little kid I had felt a strong connection to the sea, and as soon as I found out about mermaids I was hooked on them! I read every myth and legend I could find about them and memorized them all, so I could tell others. I always believed in mermaids (still do now haha!) and I always felt most comfortable underwater. I apply the mermaid lifestyle to my everyday life by taking nature to heart; if I see litter on the beach, I will go and pick it up and dispose of it properly. I also sing daily, so that always made me feel like a mermaid in a way, as that is a key trait of theirs. I just try my best to be conscious of the world around me and keep an open mind; I try to see the magic in everything!

AZ: So what do you do for a living, and are mermaids involved in your career path?

LRS: Mermaids are definitely involved in my career path in many ways! I'm currently at Tech Music School in London working toward a music degree focused on singing, but I do mermaid events on the side when I can. I also work for an events company doing character work and workshops all over the country. I am hoping to make "Mermaiding" my full time career, and looking into setting up as a business, offering various services with more mermaids.

AZ: That's great! So how did you get into the mermaid events and appearances?

LRS: Completely by accident to be honest, haha! I was looking for mermaid tattoos on Google and mermaid tails for sale came up. I checked it out and fell in love with the tails, so I bought my own! I then emailed around as many places as I could think of to let them know about the mermaid services I could offer them. I waited to hear back, some I got lucky with, others not so much.

AZ: Wow!! So I've been seeing these real life mermaid tails popping up everywhere as well!! What exactly are these tails made of, and are they expensive?

LRS: Well my first tail is made from neoprene with a latex overlay and a Finis Foil monofin in the fluke. This was a beautiful tail but unfortunately didn't last very long (less than a year) before it started to show wear and tear. That tail cost me about £500 (\$836.60 USD) with shipping included. My next tail is a [Finfolk Productions](#) tail and is costing me approximately £4000 (\$6692.80 USD) with a lot of added extras and shipping included. This tail is made from pure silicone with a Competitor monofin inside the fluke for extra propulsion. This tail weighs about 30-40 lbs out of water!

AZ: Wow! So you really go swimming with these tails on! Was it hard to adjust to swimming while wearing one? Was that a new learning process for you?

LRS: Oh yea, I try and swim as often as I can at a pool in London to keep in practice and learn new things. For me it wasn't too difficult to pick up as I always used to strap my legs together as a kid and swim like a dolphin! I learned to swim at a young age too, so confidence in the water was never an issue for me either, luckily. I've gotta tell you, the feeling you get when swimming with a tail on is just incredible! The power and grace the tail give you in the water is magnificent! It sounds crazy too, but with the tail on, my breath hold underwater increases! It's like I genuinely don't need as much air because I'm a mermaid haha!

AZ: Wow! Have you ever considered attempting to do free diving (a form of deep sea diving that relies on a diver's ability to hold his or her breath until resurfacing rather than on the use of a breathing apparatus such as scuba gear)? That is an art in it of itself!

LRS: I have been learning to free dive to help enhance my mermaid performance. As a singer, I am used to breathing techniques that are somewhat similar to that of free diving, so this helps me quite a lot, too.

AZ: That is so cool that you are finding ways to incorporate your singing into your mermaid gig... very creative!

LRS: Thanks! I incorporate it into my performance also... I will be appearing at the [Folkestone Mermaid Festival](#) in Kent in July, where I will be singing in my brand new tail on the main stage. Also, I will be playing in the shallows on the beach, so I'm looking forward to that at the moment!

AZ: That's so amazing!! What is your favorite bit of mermaid pop culture, either books, movies, artworks, etc.?

LRS: I absolutely love a good mermaid film, I adore Splash, Aquamarine, and of course The Little Mermaid. I read loads of mermaid fiction and any book I can get my hands on about their folklore. I found a beautiful place in Cornwall called [Zennor](#) that is steeped in mermaid legend, so I visited it and bought every book about the legend they had, haha!

AZ: Oh wow... I will def have to look into that place myself!! Thank you so much for your interview!!

LRS: You're very welcome! Thanks for asking me to be a part of it!



CONTACT:

If you would like to book Lily-Rose, The Mermaid, for an event, please email her at MermaidLilyRose@hotmail.co.uk

WWW.ABRITISHMERMAID.CO.UK

Mermaid, Lily-Rose Sheppard taking her new custom made Finfolk Productions "Fire" Tail out for a swim at her local pool!



CUSTOM MERMAID TAILS

Photographer Credit:
Swimming with Tail (Left): Tom Sweek
Holding My Breath (Right): Daniel Taylor

Finfolk Productions is the creative collaboration between two twin sister artists, Abby & Bryn Roberts. Their Minneapolis, Minnesota based company specializes in realistic, fully swimmable mermaid tails designed to give all aspiring mermaids THE TRUE LIFE EXPERIENCE! These tails are beautiful works of art in themselves, but their underwater functionality give them the unique flair that keep their mermaid clients coming back for more! According to their Facebook page from which they directly conduct their sales, the duo states that the tails are made out of "100% Dragonskin and platinum cure silicone"! They also all come with Finis Trainer monofins, but offer Competitor monofins as an upgrade. These tails take the "Mermaid Way of Life" to a whole new level, which is very apparent in the support the team receives from all around the globe! They far exceeded the amount of pledges they had asked for on their Kickstarter Campaign that they used in 2013, to enable them to take an opportunity to work with underwater photographer Alicia Franco, which would help bring their business to the mainstream masses! On this page, we learn that they gathered the inspiration to form the business during a trip to the Mermaid Cove at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival.

How It All Began: "Through the dusty pathways, hot, bright sun, and the long wait in line, swam a mermaid enclosed in a small tank. Her long hair twirled around her and her tail flipped gracefully in the water, reflecting the sunlight. A small girl approached the tank with wonder and awe on her face as the mermaid gazed at her, a smile on her lips while she sang an enchanting tune. The girl turned to her father, her pig tails wiggling defiantly. She placed her hands on her hips and gleefully cried, "See, Dad? I told you mermaids were real!" And as they say folks, the rest is history!

The campaign page was complete with an amazingly inspiring, gorgeously filmed video, all shot underwater of professional swimmers Alyssa Adair and Maddie Wikstrom, wearing the tails and interacting with the aquatic life in the depths of the ocean of scenic Oahu, Hawaii! The campaign has since then successfully wrapped, but you can view the INSPIRING video and learn more about their tail making process on their page by following the link below!



Abby & Bryn hard at work in the Mer-Studio!

[SEE OUR VIDEO & LEARN ABOUT OUR PROCESS HERE!](#)



The team is currently working on getting their official site up and running. For now please direct all sales inquiries to their Facebook Page!



Photo by Alicia Franco

Australian Sea Dragon



Want to learn more
about these magical
creatures? Watch the
Leafy Sea Dragon
Documentary on
YouTube NOW!

Stock Images

By Justina Carubia

I know you're probably thinking that the creature above looks an awful lot like a fancier version of a Sea Horse, but don't be mistaken! It is actually a "Leafy Seadragon" or "Glauert's Seadragon", a marine fish in the Syngnathidae family, which also includes seahorses. The two creatures look a lot alike, except the Leafy Sea Dragon looks just like its descriptive name. It has green leaf-like protrusions extending from all over its body, which are not used for functioning propulsion purposes, but rather to camouflage itself from potential predators! These creatures look an awful lot like seaweed to the mistaking eye!

These creatures are slightly larger than seahorses and feed on plankton and other small crustaceans by sucking them up through their pipe-like snout, as they do not have teeth. They are found only in the waters of Southern Australia, which explains why they are the state's marine emblem, and the focus for local conservation. They usually spend their time hanging around kelp covered rocks and clumps of sea grass, over sand patches in waters up to 164 ft. deep!

I first learned about these wondrous creatures while watching The Jeff Corwin Experience, upon a Netflix binge. This show inspired me to find out more information about them, as they are such unique and beautiful creatures! I really wanted to share them with you, and I hope to one day be able to see one up close and personal! However, chances of that are pretty slim since breeding this creature in captivity has so far been unsuccessful! I guess I'll have to take up scuba diving and make a trip to Southern Australia!

WWW.LEAFYSEADRAPONS.NET

SAVE OUR OCEANS

The ocean is a beautiful and wondrous place that us humans have the privilege of marvelling at, but we often take it for granted! Yes it is beautiful, and it is OUR responsibility as human beings, to keep it that way. There are many things we can all do in our daily lives to help preserve our oceanic wildlife and keep our waters as healthy as they can possibly be. There are some things that we just can't avoid, but when we DO have the option, it's up to us to choose the better ones in order to make the differences we need to change our planet for the better! Here is a list of 10 things we can all do on a daily basis, to conserve and protect our planet's oceans. (-Justina Carubia)

10 Things You Can Do to Save the Ocean

1. Mind Your Carbon Footprint and Reduce Energy Consumption

Reduce the effects of climate change on the ocean by leaving the car at home when you can and being conscious of your energy use at home and work. A few things you can do to get started today: Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs, take the stairs, and bundle up or use a fan to avoid oversetting your thermostat.

2. Make Safe, Sustainable Seafood Choices

Global fish populations are rapidly being depleted due to demand, loss of habitat, and unsustainable fishing practices. When shopping or dining out, help reduce the demand for overexploited species by choosing seafood that is both healthful and sustainable.

[CLICK HERE FOR AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE TO CHOOSING HEALTHIER, MORE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD!](#)

3. Use Fewer Plastic Products

Plastics that end up as ocean debris contribute to habitat destruction and entangle and kill tens of thousands of marine animals each year. To limit your impact, carry a reusable water bottle, store food in nondisposable containers, bring your own cloth tote or other reusable bag when shopping, and recycle whenever possible.

4. Help Take Care of the Beach

Whether you enjoy diving, surfing, or relaxing on the beach, always clean up after yourself. Explore and appreciate the ocean without interfering with wildlife or removing rocks and coral. Go even further by encouraging others to respect the marine environment or by participating in local beach cleanups.

5. Don't Purchase Items That Exploit Marine Life

Certain products contribute to the harming of fragile coral reefs and marine populations. Avoid purchasing items such as coral jewelry, tortoiseshell hair accessories (made from hawksbill turtles), and shark products.

6. Be an Ocean-Friendly Pet Owner

Read pet food labels and consider seafood sustainability when choosing a diet for your pet. Never flush cat litter, which can contain pathogens harmful to marine life. Avoid stocking your aquarium with wild-caught saltwater fish, and never release any aquarium fish into the ocean or other bodies of water, a practice that can introduce non-native species harmful to the existing ecosystem.

7. Support Organizations Working to Protect the Ocean

Many institutes and organizations are fighting to protect ocean habitats and marine wildlife. Find a national organization and consider giving financial support or volunteering for hands-on work or advocacy. If you live near the coast, join up with a local branch or group and get involved in projects close to home.

8. Influence Change in Your Community

Research the ocean policies of public officials before you vote or contact your local representatives to let them know you support marine conservation projects. Consider patronizing restaurants and grocery stores that offer only sustainable seafood, and speak up about your concerns if you spot a threatened species on the menu or at the seafood counter.

9. Travel the Ocean Responsibly

Practice responsible boating, kayaking, and other recreational activities on the water. Never throw anything overboard, and be aware of marine life in the waters around you. If you're set on taking a cruise for your next vacation, do some research to find the most eco-friendly option.

10. Educate Yourself About Oceans and Marine Life

All life on Earth is connected to the ocean and its inhabitants. The more you learn about the issues facing this vital system, the more you'll want to help ensure its health—then share that knowledge to educate and inspire others.

- Source: www.NationalGeographic.com

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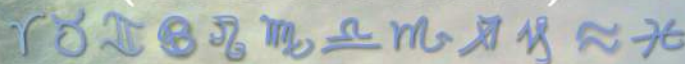
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Artwork:
"Poseidon"
by Luis Haseo
(Yucatan, Mexico)

NEPTUNE GOD OF THE SEA

BY ASTROLOGER
RENEE FRANCIS
(THESESTARS)



I personally like to call him Poseidon—and so did the Greeks. To them he was the God of the Sea. The Romans honored him as such too, but also assigned him a “God-ship” over horses. Not sure why they did that.

Anyhoo, Neptune, whether you’re Greek or Roman, is the 8th planet from Sun and because of his distance from the Sun, some astrologers say that most folks don’t even feel Neptune in their birth charts, unless of course he is strengthfully placed in your horoscope when you are born.

Marilyn Monroe, one of the most celebrated actresses of our time, had Neptune in her first house at birth with a gorgeous trine to the planet of beauty, Venus. The first house of our birth chart is the image we show to the world when we step on to its stage. Marilyn “Norma Jean” Monroe was fascinatingly able to cast her “Marilyn Steam” at will. Typically anyone who has either the planet Neptune or its sign Pisces rising at birth will find that the camera instantly loves you. Just like it did with Miss Monroe, with the help of Venus.

Thieves, con-artists, psychopaths, nurses, singers, sea captains, movie-makers, actors and actresses along with musicians, and all types of artists typically have strongly placed Neptunes at birth, because Neptune is the one celestial body out there responsible for casting glamour, spells, and creating illusions. Each of the planets has their jobs to do for us here on Earth.

Just as it is Saturn’s job to bind us to our obligations and Mars’s job to get us off our butts, it is Neptune’s job to get you to believe and create magic if you use him positively. He is a powerful one in our charts when he hits one of the angles, such as he did with Marilyn—Sometimes I like to think of Neptune as both your curse and your blessing.

Poor Marilyn had the dreamy steamy look that Neptune rising blessed her with, but his opposition to Marilyn’s relationship house had that dang Joe DiMaggio divorcing her for that famous photograph of her dress blowing up, showing her panties. So while Neptune casts a glamorous hue, he is all about sorrows and losses too.

One of my good Sea Captain friends has Neptune at one of the other crucial angles in his chart. This crucial angle is the fourth house and for this next example, you just need to know that the fourth house is located underneath your feet. It’s the ground you are standing on, but it also rules your home, neighborhood, mother, and your bathroom.

Now not everybody can go to sea—but a man with Neptune anchored at the cusp of his 4th house (his ground) is born with sea legs because he feels inherently comfortable standing on water. It comes natural to him. It comes so natural to him, that a decision to transport his recently deceased Dad’s 52 foot sail boat, “The Barralong” came with confidence to its new owners, who desired a pressing delivery date. No matter that the Captain and his competent crew had to maneuver through two storms to get there.

You see, at the time they set sail for the delivery, Neptune as the ruler of the Sea, was in retrograde motion, which was the cause of a few storm delays along the way. So the initial 10 day trip took almost close to a month. “The Barralong” and its hands-on-deck all arrived safe and sound. Well, of course they did. Mercury, ruler of the hands and communications, was in a beautiful trine to Neptune when they left dock, embarking on this thousand mile journey.

If you have Neptune on your 7th house angle, your mates confuse you—or you may marry a poet, artist or musician. Lucille Ball had Neptune in the 7th and married musician/actor/director, Desi Arnaz.

If you have Neptune on your 10th house angle, you’re likely to be a movie director, actor, mystery writer, photographer, or famous psychic. Walt Disney, James Caan, Agatha Christie, and Edgar Cayce all had 10th house Neptunes. So did George Pimpton, whose Photo Journalism on African Wildlife for Life Magazine turned into a primetime television film.

Neptune throws you a muse, shines some magic your way, and helps you write the next great song, book, or gets you to nurse someone back to health. On the bad side, he’ll allow someone to steal your car, sell you a dream home with sewage problems, or get you to experiment with a new mind altering drug.

Let’s now take a walk around the zodiac and see how Neptune’s position in Pisces at this time might be affecting each of your solar houses. Understand that it takes him 164 years to make a full orbit of all the Zodiac signs. So if we divide that by 12 zodiac signs, Neptune spends roughly 14 years in each of them. Sounds like a life sentence, doesn’t it? Well, it certainly gives you some time to get to the influence and create something worthwhile.



Renee Francis Conway is an Astrologer who still prefers to think of herself as a student of the stars. Connect with her and keep your eyes on the stars at her [TheseStars](#) page on Facebook.

Abra-zine! **GET YOUR FREE NATAL CHART!** Exclusive FROM THESESTARS

As an "Abra-Zine!" reader, you are entitled to a free jpeg copy of your Natal Birth Chart. Just send along your exact birth details to me offering the date, exact time, and location of your birth in a private message to me at my [TheseStars Facebook Page](#). In addition, while casting your birth chart, I'll take a moment to offer you a few tidbits on Neptune in your chart!

Aries: Neptune transits your Solar 12th house, this is a time of reflection and deep inner concerns. Evaluate and question what your life has meant in spirit terms.

Taurus: Neptune transits your Solar 11th house and you may become more attracted to and interested in spiritual and psychic matters. Be particularly careful making new friends.

Gemini: Neptune's transit to your Solar 10th house could make it a confusing time career-wise if you are not doing what you really want to do professionally. Don't be afraid to try something new. You could find yourself a muse for writing.

Cancer: Neptune transits your Solar 9th; seek higher consciousness and spiritual truths. You are given the opportunity to handle your view on life from a new perspective that aligns you with the universe.

Leo: Neptune transits your Solar 8th, which could color your joint finances with others into losses. There is the danger of misunderstandings with resources. You'll also desire to access the deepest aspects of your subconscious mind.

Virgo: Neptune transits your Solar 7th and will affect all the one-on-one relationships in your life. Be open and honest in all your dealings and communications, you could very well mistake the intentions of others.

Libra: Neptune transits your Solar 6th, which affects your work and your health. It's a great time to pay close attention to the food you eat and make your talents a service to others.

Scorpio: Neptune transits your Solar 5th allowing for expectations in love to run very high because you are interested only in a spiritual union. Artistic creativity is stimulated and your imagination improves.

Sagittarius: Neptune transits your Solar 4th bringing about some changes in your home environment. It is now that you want to make this space special to you and an extension of who you are psychologically.

Capricorn: Neptune transits your Solar 3rd and will insist you listen intently; give all communications your complete and undivided attention. If you don't, misunderstandings will confuse your personal life.

Aquarius: Neptune transits your Solar 2nd which is a time to let go of the things you own that you think define you. They should no longer be an extension of your Ego. Your sense of value about yourself is getting spiritualized.

Pisces: Neptune transits to your Solar 1st house which might lend the desire that you keep yourself and your personal life private, but it would be better if you reroute that desire to learn more about yourself.



Artwork:
"Neptune"
By Roy Carubia
(New Jersey)

Joke by Dear Miss Mermaid Jokes

Artwork
"Mermaid & Jelly"
By Belinda S
22 Years Old (England, UK)
Created with Samsung Galaxy
Note Tablet & Sketchbook PRO



What has beautiful
hair, a pretty face,
two arms, a fish's
tail, looks like a
mermaid, but isn't a
mermaid?

A PICTURE
OF A
MERMAID!
LOL!

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I'M DREAMS

I'M MS. DEAR

MERMAIDS
The truth is in the ANAGRAMS

RIM
DAMES

ADMIRE MS.

Mermaid Anagrams

By TheseAnagrams
(Renee Francis)

We here at TheseAnagrams® decided to take special look at this word-- MERMAIDS. Proclaim the motto, "The Truth is in the Anagrams" for good reason. You see, all truth is available to us because of sound. The words you think, speak, and write have a life of their own. Just like the cells in your body make up your physical composition, so do the letters in words, which make up what matters on the physical plain.

For instance, without the SUN AND MOON no life would be able to exist here on Earth. So there is no wonder that when you rearrange the letters of the word phrase SUN AND MOON it swirls into the truth MAN ON SOUND. Doesn't the Bible say something to the effect, "In the beginning was the word"? So WORDS are pretty important. WORDS become the SWORD when you use them to either cut someone, or something, down or up. Do they not?

It's a funny thing, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. It's been given a full set of rules one needs to remember and adhere to so that we sound educated when we communicate. Were you aware that UNTAME COMIC is an anagram for the word, COMMUNICATE? I believe it's quite endearing--because wasn't it the late comedian George Carlin who enjoyed making us bust-a-gut with his comb through the downright confusing aspects of THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, which accordingly anagrams into, HE'S ELEGANT LAUGHING?

Remarkably, the word phrase THE ALPHABET can transform itself into THAT BE A HELP and THE ABLE PATH, while the word LETTERS can turn into a TRESTLE that allows for a byway to search for the truth by making words out of words. So let's take a stroll through the words we can find hidden inside the word, MERMAIDS.

Well, as I take my word scrying peek, I see the words DAMES and SEA. That's pretty dang cool. Most of the images we see of MERMAIDS in art are of females in the ocean. No one can refute that precision. Using the word DAMES in an anagram of MERMAIDS we get, RIM DAMES. In order for us to see them, they have to surface the water, right?

And I am simply delighted to see that the word DREAMS is also hiding in plain sight of the word MERMAIDS---and using it, we have the anagram, I'M DREAMS. You can't argue that almost every little girl at one time or another had a fervor for a MERMAID costume, themed birthday party, or her room decorated in such fishy feminine details.

And lastly, the anagrams ADMIRE MS. and I'M DEAR MS. surely, without any doubt, reveal the truth about our long held fondness for these ladies of the sea.

 FOR MORE ANAGRAM FUN,
VISIT THESEANAGRAMS ON FACEBOOK!

Artwork:
"SHE"
By Oli Rooze
(Russia)

MER-GAMES

Feel free to print out to complete!

H T A A P O L S M O N F S N E
S X L R R O D E R R C I N N Z
I J U I C W R A I E R E I O S
F P S E F M O S N E T D A E K
R O R L A E C H N K N T A N E
A S U I C Y K E A U R D I S T
T E D E I R V L E S R A P L W
S I X I T S U L T A U D H C G
H D R F C S E S G S N I F S G
N O B M Q S Q O T O F S P C T
V N K O T D N S E A W I T C H
D R A O B F R U S A C P L I R
N I H P L O D P A R O E I I Z
D I N G L E H O P P E R A H M
P I R A T E I V Q R T Z E N S

Find These Words:

ARIEL	CRUSTACEAN	DINGLEHOPPER
DOLPHIN	FINS	GLITTER
MERMAID	OCEAN	PIRATE
POSEIDON	SEADRAGON	SEASHELLS
SEAWITCH	SHARKNADO	SHIP
SIREN	STARFISH	SURFBOARD
UNDINE	URSULA	

**FIND YOUR WAY OUT
OF THE MERMAZE!**



Artwork Right:
"Maroon Mermaid"
By Gordon Napier
(United Kingdom)

Background
Mermaids:
"Adrift" &
"From the Dark Depths"
By Rebecca Sinz



Across *Note* The black squares represent spaces!

2. The Great Blue Hole is a large submarine sinkhole off the coast of ____.
3. The voice of Ariel in Disney's 'The Little Mermaid'.
5. A fish that lures prey with a fleshy lobe attached to a filament that arises from the snout and hangs in front of the mouth.
6. They are poor and unfortunate.
8. The tall triangular fin of a dolphin, shark, or killer whale.
9. A tropical marine mollusk with a spiral shell that may bear long projections and have a flared lip.
10. Pieces of wood that are floating on the sea or have been washed ashore.

Down

1. Fictional ship in the Pirates of the Caribbean film series.
4. A marine echinoderm that has a spherical or flattened shell covered in mobile spines.
7. The ____ is always greener in somebody else's lake.

Caption This!



Send your best captions to JCarubia@gmail.com to enter for a chance to be featured plus **FREE AD SPACE** in the next issue!



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Mermaid FESTIVAL

SAT 19TH and
SUN 20TH JULY 2014
Sunny Sands Folkestone

mermaid parade funfair
fancy dress live music
competitions dancing

Enter a fantasy world of
Merfolk, Pirates and Sea
Babies and join the parade from
12 noon on Saturday 19th July.
With face painting, storytelling
and free workshops, this is an
event not to be missed!



Plus, on Sunday 20th
July Folkestone's annual
Sandcastle Competition



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Submit to the Fall 2014 Issue

WE WILL BE EXPLORING THE THEME OF

Fear

Have you ever been afraid of something? We have all had to face our fears at some point or another! This fall, "Abra-zine!" wants to hear about your stories pertaining to fear! Tell us what you're afraid of, or how you overcame your fears! We will also accept themes of Halloween, Horror & Scary Stories, Autumn Harvest, Witches, Ghosts, Vampires, Werewolves, Supernatural, or Back to School, etc.

We are looking for submissions in the form of stories, articles, interviews, videos/vlogs, poetry, prose, lyrics, music, artwork, arts n' crafts projects, how to guides, photography, recipes, meditations, affirmations, travel pieces, giveaways, etc.! These are just some things to jog your imagination! If you have an idea that can pertain to our theme that is not on this list, please send it to us!

BEFORE SUBMITTING PLEASE READ OUR

FULL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES HERE!



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THANKS FOR READING!



MAD WORLD 1864

ROSETTA 2

SISTER YES

ROSETTA

LOLITA

SABRINA

1864

HELENA

Better Not
NOW

LABYRINTH

012

SHE

2
+
2
=
4



SAY IT

LOLITA

DYMPE
TRAVEL

Lolly

Sea

WIG SEA

Oli
Rooze

STAY

Shower
One

Terra

Terra

Wonderful life

Don't

Let

Art By Oli Rooze
(Russia)