

DISPATCH FROM THE TONGUE-AND-CHEEKY WORLD OF

colin christian

story: Natalie Campisi | design: Leigh Johnson

Colin putting the finishing touches on a sculpture inside his Tampa studio



It feels like I'm driving along the fringes of the city. That dusty patch along Adamo Drive smattered with concrete-clad industrial shops, wholesalers and sundry other businesses that aren't for the pedestrian shopper. A small road, one that wouldn't accommodate most SUVs, leads me to a warehouse divided by several bays. The sun is beating down along the silvery gravel as I approach the open warehouse where a yet-to-be finished glittering fiberglass sculpture of a (still headless) woman greets me to the soundtrack of ambient electronic music. This is where London-born Colin Christian makes his art.

Naturally, the first thought that pops to mind is Colin's story of Will.I.Am, member of hip hop group The Black Eyed Peas, visiting his studio in the dead of night. With a laugh, Colin observes, "People don't know it, but crazy stuff goes on in Tampa."

With successful exhibitions all over the world, from New York to Hong Kong along with an illustrious list of clients: Kanye West, jewelry and cosmetics darling Tarina Tarantino and Nike CEO Mark Parker, to name a few, Colin's unassuming mien is both refreshing and disarming—a bit like his art.

Drawing from Japanese anime, classic pin-up girl and some of his muses like Jane Fonda's title character "Barbarella," as well as film and fashion (his dream clients are filmmaker Christopher Nolan and fashion

designer Tom Ford) the sculptures are a clever mix of camp, glamour and sci-fi fantasy. Using auto-quality paints, the effect is a shiny, rock-hard exterior. The faces, which are made from flocked silicone, a process that entails depositing many small fiber particles on the surface to create skin that looks realistic, are painted with 20 different pigments, because, as Colin notes, skin is not just one color.

As far as the sculptures' sizes—from five feet to as tall as 10 feet—Colin explains that it's all part of the look he's going for: a living cartoon.

"I always want the pieces bigger than people, so they're always looking down on you. That's the idea anyway...awe and admiration. They're always done as figures in charge," Colin says.

After 15 years of hard work, he remarks that he never thought he'd be here when he was younger, he's finally at the point in his career where he calls the shots—the ultimate goal of every artist. While he will take requests regarding color choices (to an extent) his work, which fetches between \$10-70k, is truly the product of his imagination.

And what's next for the man who ironically derives most of his inspiration from nature, especially for color choices—just look at bugs and fish, the colors are brilliant he exclaims, perhaps furniture or even experimental environments. Wherever his dreams take him, it's sure to be something we've never seen before. ■

Photo: Gabriel Burgos



Photo: Eagle Photographic

To see more of his work or commission a piece, visit www.colinchristian.com for details.

Colin posing with his sculpture, "Ga'ia"