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Lara Chapman



Drawing With Glass: Laura Laine

Focus on Finland

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Fashion illustrator [Laura Laine](#) talks to Tlmag about her surreal drawings and her new venture into the world of glass blown sculptures

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Pencil stroke after pencil stroke [Laura Laine](#) builds her surreal and evocative illustrations. The Helsinki-based artist works predominantly as a fashion illustrator meticulously produces her detailed drawings in a process that can take up to 3 days to complete a single figure.

However, recently Laine has taken her surreal worldview and applied it to a new world of creation—the world of glass blowing that relies on quick processes to shape glass while it is still hot. Venturing into this ancient craft, her drawings jumps from life on the page into 3D sculptural drawings. The glass pieces begin as sketches and then are transformed through

the collaborative creative input, interpretation and skills of the master glass blowers. Her first glass series, “The Wet Collection”, depicts magical sea life. Currently Laine is developing a new body of works in glass with [Ajeto studio](#) in Nový Bor, Czech Republic.

Tlmag talks to [Laura Laine](#) about her experience of stepping out of the world of drawing and into the arena of glass.

Tlmag: How would you describe your practice and philosophy towards making?

[Laura Laine](#): Drama is always better than no drama.

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There is a sense of the surreal in your work, why does this appeal to you?

For me, surrealism means playfulness more than anything. I'm also interested in distorting and destroying shape and form. So I guess destruction and play appeal to me.

It is interesting that you have expanded your practice from fashion illustration to also encompass working with glass, how did this come about?

I never thought I'd stay solely with drawing for the rest of my life. I have always been extremely

How do you feel that your background in drawing translates into working with glass? Do you think it gives you a unique perspective to an age-old material and process?

I have a long background and have done extensive studies in drawing, but when I started to work with glass I did not know anything about the material. I think maybe that's why I keep coming up with ideas that the glassblowers have to try to make for the first time in their lives.

Drawing is still my primary way by which I think and try to understand things. Although, I'm not sure

interested in sculpture and ceramics. In 2013, I was invited by the National Glass Museum of Holland to take part in a large group show. The show consisted of works by renowned old and contemporary glass artists from around the world and I was invited amongst a few other visual artists based on none of us ever having worked with glass before. We all collaborated with the Leerdam Glassworks studio to create pieces for the show, and during that process, I fell in love with glass. I later worked with the same studio and glassblowers for my solo show in Helsinki Design Museum, and I still work with the same guys. The funny thing is that in my family there are actually many generations of glassblowers, but I only found out about this later.

though if drawing as a pure medium has anything that transforms directly into my sculptures, but naturally they both share visual and conceptual similarities because of what interests me.

I was struck by the contrast between the generally monotone palette of your drawings and the very colorful pieces of glass artworks you produced, why have you chosen to embrace such bright colors in the glass works?

My next sculptures will be all golden. With my previous glass pieces, I was really into cartoonish strong colors. I think my use of color is a reaction

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to the material in a sense, in drawing I'm still extremely fascinated with just a plain pencil and a monochrome scale. I have also made very colorful mixed media drawings in the past and lately colorful watercolors, I think it's just something that keeps constantly changing in my work.

Despite your introspective process of drawing, collaboration also seems to be a large part of your practice, in particular at the moment with the glassblowers. How do you find the experience of being an individual artist producing your own work changes when you work with others?

The Wet Collection suggests, about freezing the movement of things (sea creatures) that are by their nature constantly moving in a very fluid and lively space. In some ways, my new sculptures are continuing this theme.

The new works are based on the concept of Eastern philosophy of subtle bodies in objects, plants and humans, and their capacity to retain energies in different ways. In objects, spaces and plants these bodies exist in a very solid form, and so they can retain energy longer than humans in which these bodies are loose and flexible. I wanted to capture some combinations into a sculpture form and

It's a total shift in working but I fully enjoy it. I'm lucky to have found really great people to collaborate with, and they inspire me further. Working with glass and glassblowers has brought an ongoing experience of expansion and relaxation to my work that I couldn't have maybe discovered on my own.

You are producing a new series of glass pieces for the spring, could you tell us a bit about this. What is the inspiration behind them? Where will they be made? Are they also going to revolve around the theme of sea creatures?

present them in a monumental way blown in golden glass as if the objects would themselves become somehow holy through this process. When we think about energy, we think about something that can permeate any space and time, but I want to freeze it in a moment. The same principle applies to the amorphous nature of glass material itself; when cold it is a solid unmoving form, but the glass molecules are theoretically in constant never-ending movement.

Laura Laine will be showing her glasswork at Spazio Nobile's 'Finnish Season' from March 2019-2020 in collaboration with the Finnish Cultural Institutes Benelux & France

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