

The Truth Behind Appearances

Mila Tenaglia (February 25, 2016)



He started out as an Alpine guide in the vast stretch of mountains in Veneto and Trentino. Today he lives in New York where he works with a scalpel on paper. Marco Gallotta is an original artist who loves exploring the rich and complex relationship between man and nature, carving out the truth hiding behind appearances.

Like everyone searching for something, [Marco Gallotta](#) [2] is the restless type. Born in Battipaglia, in the province of Salerno, after working as an Alpine guide in Veneto and Trentino, he moved to Geneva, London and finally New York.

Here he realized his dream of studying in the Big Apple and becoming an artist. Upon arriving in the City in 2000, he visited the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) [3] (FIT): “I knew immediately I was in the right place. I enrolled and earned my degree in General Illustration and Fashion Illustration.”

What did your time at FIT do for you? What about that experience has stayed with you?

It was a very intense formative period during which I had the privilege of working with great illustrators like Vincent di Fate and Bill Donovan. To this day my art and the fashion world coexist and are constantly intersecting. I often work with fashion magazines and photographers. Some of



my work was recently used for a photo set in Vogue Sposa.

You've also worked with big names like Ennio Morricone and major brands from Nike to Radio City Music Hall and the United Nations. Of all those experiences, which has been the most creatively stimulating for you?

Definitely working with maestro [Ennio Morricone](#) [4] and actor [Will Smith](#) [5]. I had the privilege of assisting the former during some of his pre-concert rehearsals. Seeing up-close a musical genius at work is a unique experience I will always remember. And it was actually on a trip to Los Angeles with Ennio Morricone that I had the good fortune of meeting Will Smith, whose portrait I later made. That was another case when I was lucky enough to be able to interact with an extraordinary actor and ascertain for myself what a shockingly kind person he is.

You now live in New York but in your work there is still a trace of your past life, when you were an Alpine guide and lived immersed in awe- inspiring natural landscapes. And that trace has combined with who you are today, which reflects your urban life. Man and nature seems to be fundamental components of your artistic research. How much has your career been affected by a life that straddles mountains and metropolises?

Every stop along the way has been fundamental to my artistic growth and has given me a way to study the profound and complex relationship between humans and nature often present in my work. To me, humans and nature are a single entity.

Man is nature and plays a part in everything on this earth in which he lives. In Trentino and Veneto, I was able to live in close contact with nature and appreciate it in all its splendor. London and David Bowie. 36 x 36. Cut Out Paper. Acrylics.

New York, on the other hand, with their multiethnic and multicultural realities, have given me a way of studying the various substrata of urban culture and the various people it is comprised of. Everywhere I've lived, I've contemplated human interventions in nature and the consequences of such actions. The relationship between man and nature varies depending on the place, but the connection is nonetheless very strong, and nature is inseparable from humans. My works do not try to imitate nature, but they are often inspired by elements such as the wind, water and fire.

You're like an artisan of art: you cut, assemble and superimpose images in specific and peculiar ways. Your tool is a scalpel and your materials are paper on which you 'operate.' Why did you choose this technique of paper cutting and how did you arrive at that concept?

I am always on the lookout for new ideas and constantly experimenting with new techniques. Since the beginning of my career I have used geometrical shapes such as circles, triangles and rectangles to create stylized figures and faces. That is where I got the idea of cutting up my subjects and transforming them into organic, irregular images meticulously incised and made almost transparent. Sometimes I add layers of color and wax, creating irregular surfaces that I find very interesting.

One can see in your portraits a desire to create an ongoing dialogue between the viewer and the artwork.

My subjects explore a truth that goes beyond appearances. The human body—faces in particular—is the most fascinating thing for me and I draw inspiration from it. The meticulous cuttings serve to draw the viewer into the interior world of the subject and highlight that unique essence that characterizes and distinguishes him from others.

About your New York experience, what do you see this city as giving you? How has the public here responded to your work?

From the start New York was a huge source of inspiration for me. It's continuously stimulating and manages to instill a lot in you. It's really a place where anything can happen, even if you need to be constantly fighting to get results, carving out a space for yourself... Fortunately for me, I think that my technique has already borne fruit and the public seems to like my art.



What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment I'm working on a personal project that consists of a series of portraits of artists and celebrities I admire. I'm also collaborating with a famous Brazilian street artist in 2016 and have a project with an Italian fashion house. But it all has yet to happen and we'll know something more about it later.

What kind of music do you listen to while you work?

I love all kinds of music, from hip-hop to classical music. It depends on my mood... and on what's on my Pandora shuffle. One of my favorite songs is Damien Rice's "The Blower's Daughter."

Speaking of songs, I can't let you go without complimenting you on your affecting and enchanting portrait of the late David Bowie. When did you make it?

[David Bowie](#) [6] is one of my favorite artists of all time. I had always wanted to do his portrait. Last year I received this request from a collector... it wasn't done in person. The work, which is composed of six different layers of cut paper, took me hundreds of hours. It was really hard to see it go.

To see the interview with Marco Gallotta [>>>](#) [7]

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