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PISTIL

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FALL 2003



GROUNDBREAKING WOMEN

Judith DeCew

Barbara DeGenevieve

Nomy Lamm

Caridad de la Luz

Wenhwa Ts'ao

VERONIKA KOTLAJIC

Beyond Playboy

JESSE FRIEDMAN

A Personal Account

Public Private

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There came a time when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. ANAIS NIN

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The easiest kind of relationship for me is with ten thousand people. The hardest is with one. JOAN BAEZ

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A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized. FRED ALLEN

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Better to write for yourself and have no public, than to write for the public and have no self. CYRIL CONNOLLY

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Fame lost its appeal for me when I went into a public restroom and an autograph seeker handed me a pen and paper under the stall door. MARLO THOMAS

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Most people have seen worse things in private than they pretend to be shocked at in public. EDGAR WATSON HOWE





THE PERFECT MUSE

Fashion designer, gallery owner and award-winning webmaster Veronika Kotlajic bares it all in the pages of hundreds of magazines and media. Old-school feminists may snarl at her spreads in *Playboy*, but no one can deny this entrepreneur's artistry and determination. With the brains and beauty to prove it, Veronika beats the bunny stereotype and shows that women really can have it all.

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by Lauria E. Locsmondy Makeup by Annah Y.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MISSRED

"Entwine" stretch rayon blend dress with multiple silver-chained straps, \$875.00



"Cocon" fabric chainmaille top with silver adornments, \$625.00

Rayon blend low-rise skirt with silver hip chain, \$375.00





"Angular" leather thong bodysuit, \$210.00



"Marilyn 2003" sheer halter dress & attached corset with flex boning, \$675.00

This fall marks Veronika's third layout for *Playboy* during the span of a year and a half. Contrary to her obvious success, Veronika never dreamed of becoming a model. "Earlier in life, my focus was on academics," she admits. "After college, I moved back to Chicago and found myself constantly being asked, 'Can I take your picture?' ... This quickly snowballed into posing for photographers around the Midwest and eventually led to gigs all over the world." Despite requests from numerous modeling companies, Veronika is a free agent. "I am able to handle many of my own projects, keep creative control, and pick and choose my schedule," she says. With the additional responsibilities of her fashion line, Narcisse Designs, and her gallery, Echo (both co-owned by Derek Geisser), Veronika has not a second to waste.

Only two years ago, Veronika picked up a manual on Web design, which led her down the very short and inventive road of founding Narcisse Designs. Today Narcisse is an international fashion house with satellite locations in Milan, New York, Los Angeles and Paris. Why the name? "As timeless as the Greek mythos, Narcisse Designs exploits the inner ego, blurring the lines of fantasy and reality," she says.

"Most of what Narcisse embodies comes from creative intuition rather than the cookie-cutter type of training I received in college," admits Veronika, who acquired formal education in fashion design. The artist attributes "movies, artwork, sculpture [and] the female form" to her creative inspiration and describes her designs as "elegant sexuality, pushing the boundaries of social acceptance."

What's the cost of elegant sexuality? "Prices start at \$80 for a custom-made bra and go up to \$5,000 for something like my *Bird of Paradise*, [a] floor-length ostrich feather coat." Fittingly, Narcisse caters to "a discreet and elite clientele list with limited production runs," Veronika explains.

Veronika and partner Derek head the design/production department of Narcisse and recently initiated a program for up-and-coming designers to gain experience within their company. Narcisse presents biannual collections every spring and fall, which also highlight the work of their apprentices. In addition, Veronika and Derek produce seasonal fashion events for *Playboy*, which features their work.

Soon after founding Narcisse Designs, this Jane-of-all-trades opened a gallery named "Echo." "Echo was Narcisse's partner in the mythological tale," explains Veronika. "I felt it was a symbiotic relationship."

Echo specializes in exhibits of erotic and fantasy art. "I definitely believe we all are sexual beings and it [sexuality] should be celebrated as much as any other aspect of humanity." The gallery — also home to Narcisse Designs, Entropy Studios and The House of Narcisse — resembles a beautiful, mystical space with columns and chandeliers, and each wall is embellished with nudes — paintings, photography, collages and sculptures.

"Echo is a not-for-profit gallery dedicated to promoting the arts and building an artistic community both here in Chicago and internationally. We exhibit all genres of art but specialize in fantasy and classical nude work," says Veronika. "Our mission is to open communication between artist and customer, to make art more obtainable by being a not-for-profit gallery, and to bring a worldly collection of artists to Chicago and exhibit them with local artists."

Echo regularly hosts six-week exhibitions, which sponsor various local charities through attendees' donations. "The fall schedule will consist of our most publicized exhibition, which will run near Halloween. The Halloween exhibition focuses in on darker, more surrealistic art," says Veronika. "The receptions are October 25 and November 1, and the costumes the attendees wear are always outlandish."

This fall, fans — old and new — can see their favorite entrepreneur in *Playboy Magazine*, *Looker Magazine*, *Heavy Metal Fantasy Art Magazine*, *Gothic Beauty Magazine* and *Ritual Magazine*. And nothing says fame like your very own action figure. "I also make my 3-D/Action Figure debut with two statues based on paintings of me by famed artist Lorenzo Sperlona called *The Cage* and *Barbiwire*," says the star.

Check out Veronika's sites for more info on Veronika, Narcisse and Echo respectively: www.perfectmuse.com, www.narcissedesigns.com, www.houseofnarcisse.com and www.ewhgallery.org.

so you wanna be a **rock star?**

**Who doesn't have dreams
of drunken hook-ups with the
ghost of Sid Vicious while it
rains whiskey on your red
pleather mini-dress as you
sing tribute to Meatloaf?**

Sure, you're trying to get there. You've played at your friends' parties, you've practiced lip-syncing Duran Duran into your brush in front of the mirror at night. You've played at that dive bar down the street a few times, opening up for some hardcore act called Sheenballs or Showergurgle or some shit. Damn, you even have a red pleather mini-dress! You've paid your dues, but you want more. Well, here's your chance to get heard.

Let us do the work for you. Enter our very first CD contest. If you're an unsigned band and think you might impress us (harsh critics or sweetie pies?), please send a copy of your demo CD and a \$10 entry fee to be judged and (if you're lucky) put on a nationally distributed compilation CD sponsored by the one and only PISTIL Magazine.

Send submissions and payment
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 pistil magazine cd contest

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Entries must be postmarked by November 15, 2003 for consideration.
Sorry kiddos, but you must be at least 18 years old to enter. Now rock 'n' roll.

BRUCE
artist/craftsman

LOWRY

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