

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: MEESHA GOLDBERG

Confessions of a macabre pop-surrealist

Suspended deep in a block of ice, her long braids coiled around a pair of hand axes, Meesha Goldberg is determined to break free. This is not a magic trick. It's a self-portrait.

You wouldn't guess from her work that Goldberg has been painting for only about two years, but discipline and nocturnal solitude have aided her well, along with a background in figure drawing and poetry that translates vividly to the canvas.

The Queens, New York, native who now lives in Eugene, does glasswork by day but primarily aspires to realize her artistic vision through paint. It was, after all, Georgia O'Keefe's desert scenes that drew her across the country in the first place. Goldberg has since come to have a weathered, psychedelic interpretation of who we are as people.

"A lot of it is really a critique of society," Goldberg says. Her work employs a mixed iconography of popular Americana often clashing with death and the occult. The daughter of a Russo-Korean couple that orphaned her at a young age, Goldberg says that the "sensitivity of examining death, and living with it, is accessible in my work. It's an important perspective to abide with."

Conversely, her most recent painting, "Keeper," is decidedly spry. This nude of a beekeeper depicts deep harmony between woman, hive and Earth. "It's functional in a way that's one step beyond aesthetic," she says. "It's about putting out prayers and intentions and focus."

Goldberg also paints Slavic-influenced wooden altars that present what she calls "contemporary Gods." The pieces express human ignorance and self-destruction, touching on themes of technology, war and space travel.

Much of Goldberg's work heads out of state, due to an exuberant social media presence. A painting of two skeletons hugging was commissioned by a client in Texas, though prints were still sold in Eugene. Last year Goldberg's work was on display at the Maude Kerns Art Center's Día de los Muertos show, and she previously submitted work for the Mayor's Art Show, though it was relegated to Salon des Refusés.

Such a slight meant little, given that within a year her work would hang side-by-side with that of David Lynch, at the *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me 20th Anniversary* group art exhibit in Santa Monica, California. With Rick Zar, her partner both in art and love, Goldberg produced a replica of the neon sign from One-Eyed Jack's, the seedy Canadian brothel of Lynch's imagination.

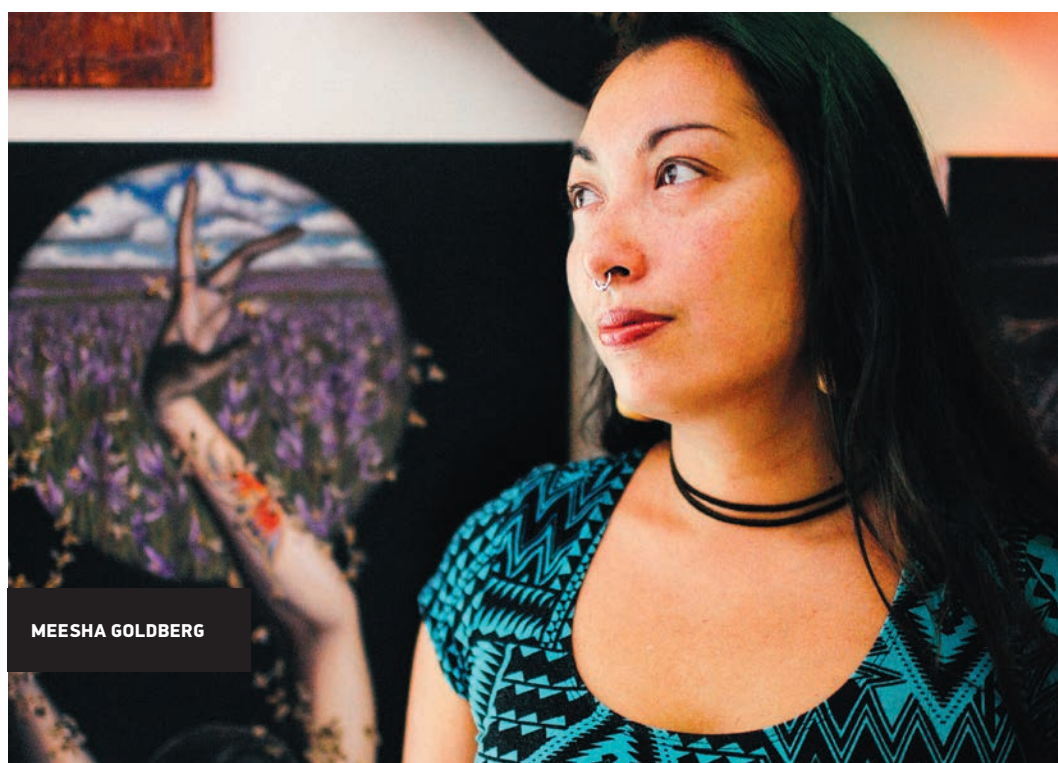
Goldberg and Zar met while she was living and working in New Mexico, and the two moved to Eugene in 2007. For Goldberg, it was about finding peace. "The mellow lifestyle of Eugene is a lot more conducive to not being distracted," says Goldberg, who thrives creatively in the local environs.

"I'm constantly inspired by the fields, forests and skies," Goldberg says. She's planning a series of traditional landscape paintings. And she will show locally soon: Goldberg's painting "Backwards Into Night" will be in The New Zone Gallery show, *The Cabinet of Steampunk Curiosities*, with an opening reception 5:30 pm Friday, Nov. 7, during First Friday ArtWalk. For the next year, she will also peck away at designing a tarot deck and, in keeping with her penchant for the ghastly, she says she'll immolate her model from "Keeper," albeit with brushstrokes. ■

Goldberg's work is currently on view at Portland's Salmon Street Studio. To see her work online, look for her Meesha Goldberg Facebook page.



'KEEPER,' OIL ON CANVAS



MEESHA GOLDBERG

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