

# It's Nice That

## Artist Aks Misyuta on her inflatable, vulnerable and cartoonish characters

Ayla Angelos

June 27, 2019



Filled with biomorphic gestures, fleshy characters and curves so round that you could pop them with a needle, Aks Misyuta's paintings are a treat for the eye. But who are these seductive characters and who is she basing them off? "Nobody and anyone," she says, "my characters lack personal features." Instead, she describes them as "grotesque and cartoonish," a somewhat morphed depiction of the people and moments around her.

Inspired by people, indeed, as she defines her working process as a "form of selfportrait". "The 'inflatable' appearance is a way to depict our vulnerable nature – just a momentary pinprick is enough sometimes to destroy," Ana tells It's Nice That. "So, for me, it's all about self-cognition and interactions: all the figures, like balloons, are floating in their own pensive universe."

Aks' working day begins like this: she enters the studio at the crack of dawn with a coffee in hand, apron on and a podcast discussing the cosmos playing in the background. Here, she prefers to work alone; as a self-taught artist, Aks divides her time between illustration and painting, "partly in front of the computer, partly in the realm of paints." This mix of the digital and analogue is a process she cites as one that goes without any "sophisticated techniques," and one that focuses more on the "enjoyable" side of creating. "The idea of doing something from scratch fascinates me, be it drawing, painting linocut or engraving," she says. "Work is a

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meditative thing for me – it pulls me in easily. From the outside, it might look really boring and robotic but, for me, it's an enriching experience. That's why I can work until midnight.”

When forming her ideas, even up until the mark of midnight, Aks likes to paint without preconceptions: “I'm absolutely spontaneous in my work.” She then covers her canvas in a single block colour – such as blue or red – and stares into the paintstained space until she sees some “invisible lines”, which later forms her compositions. “Sometimes I mark them with a clean wet brush, but I do not do any sketching – I don't do any preliminary works,” she says. “I like keeping things simple and listen to my intuition. This is how a blurry idea obtains its form.”



Although, according to her family she has already “destroyed a lot of ‘beautiful’ pictures” – “but I'd rather have a bunch of pentimenti than tolerate pictures that annoy me.” Rarely working on multiple pieces at once, Aks prefers to get through the “short yet romantic story” of one painting, leaving it when it says it's done and then commencing a new one. One of these stories can be seen through her favourite character: the “time-waster”. She explains: “I was raised in a culture (I'm Russian) where ‘the clock is ticking’ metaphor has always been widely used to make any woman above 18 uncomfortable, implying that all their endeavours are nothing in comparison with values of patriarchal society.

“Although I'm aware that time is the main treasure, only we ourselves can decide how to dispose of it. For this reason, my character celebrates the act of alleged timewasting, kind of a quiet rebel.” She continues: “Frankly speaking, I do not expect a viewer to see my concerns right away on the painted surfaces. Every artwork is a whisper in the ear.”