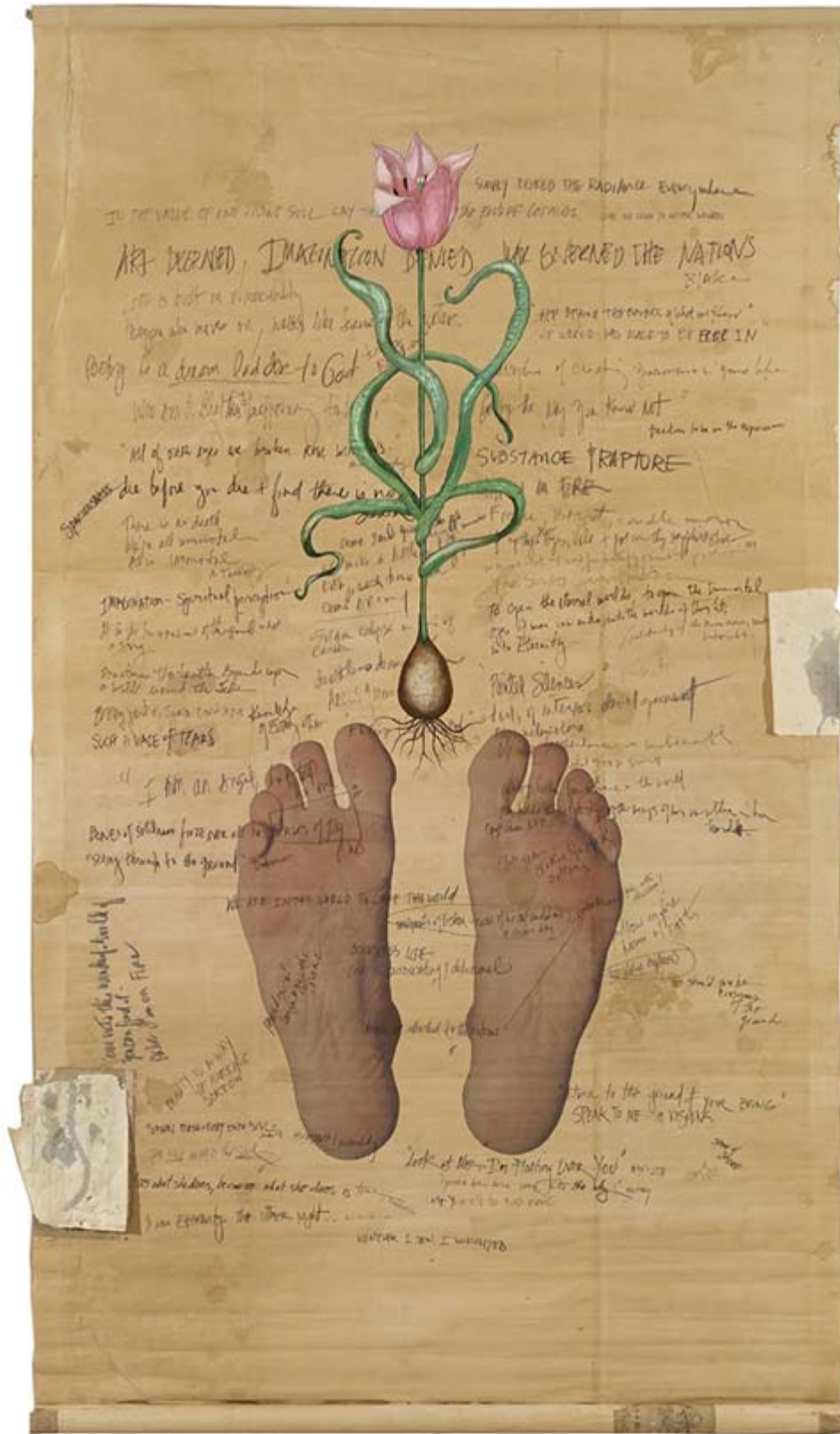
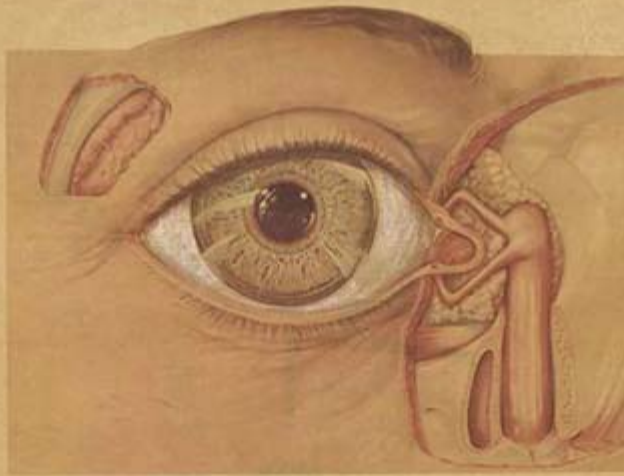


ALEXANDRA ELDRIDGE INTERVIEW



One could envy the life of a soul born to art. Reared and raised by and through it. Once married to and sired children from it. Traversed the globe on it's wings and connected to legion kindred souls via it. But then you meet Alexandra Eldridge and the woman's grace, beauty and modesty quite simply diffuse you. Her favourite colour is currently a muted lavender, her star sign double Scorpio.



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**FROM HIS SOUL; F**  
**OR THAT CALL'D BOD**  
**Y IS A PORTION OF SOUL**  
**DISCERN'D BY THE FIVE**  
**SENSES, THE CHIEF INLETS**  
**OF SOUL IN THIS AGE.**

PP. Alexandra, how would you describe yourself?

AE. Passionate, paradoxical, ecstatic, melancholy, diligent, reckless

PP. Might I add to that: exquisite, talented, smart, beautiful and generous?

AE. Without a doubt, thank you.

PP. You are a painter in the realest sense of the word. Have you always been one?

AE. All my life. My parents were both artists and writers. Their studios were at home so I knew about the life and process of the artist from birth.

PP. What a luxury. Please tell me more about your parents and upbringing?

AE. I am one of seven children. My parents, Harry and Wende Devlin, were interested in two things, Art and Children. We grew up in a huge old Victorian house in New Jersey. We had a donkey and lots of dogs. My parents wrote and illustrated 27 children's books, had a comic strip based on the craziness of our household. My father was also an architectural historian and wrote and illustrated books about architecture. Every one wanted to hang out at the Devlin household... yes, it was idyllic. They even managed to put all 7 of us through college as artists.



PP. And then one day you left. How? Why?



AE. Time to go to college at Ohio University, where I met and married my art professor.

PP. He must have been a very special man, is he?

AE. We had an extraordinary marriage. We were, in a sense, animated by one spirit. We started a community based on the ideas of William Blake called Golgonooza. The name is from Blake's mythology meaning the visionary city of art. We lived on a 70 acre farm, raised sheep, chickens and geese and had large organic gardens and built our own homes and studios. We lived a very integrated life of art and nature. We had an establishment for the handmade books called the Scriptorium. Visitors came from all over. I made all my own wines, breads and even made parchments from the skin of the sheep to paint on.



PP. That certainly could be a material for a book or film. And I believe two gorgeous boys were born there as well.

AE. Yes, Saxon and Sebastian. I think they felt they had a fairy tale start in life. For me, it gave me a great intellectual and spiritual foundation for my life. It allowed me to see art as a spiritual path. To see the making of art needing the same attention as a spiritual discipline. A devotion, a connection to silence and the unknown and the possibilities of visionary experience.



PP. William Blake is an important figure in your life and work. One can recognise traces of him in your work. Why Blake?

AE. Blake concerned himself with the imaginative reality of the inner life. He was a poet, painter, and prophet and created his own mythology. He taught me the importance of the interior life. He gave me the courage to focus where I had always privately been focused. Like Blake and Jung, my painting is a chronicling of my imaginative, dreaming life.

PP. Where do you live now?

AE. I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where one can maintain a dreaming state with not a lot of difficulty. I do travel and move around quite a bit, though. I just moved back to Santa Fe after three months of travelling all over Europe and six months of living in Brooklyn, New York.

PP. What is your definition of DREAM?

AE. Going to deeper realities. Accessing the unseen, diving deep into the unconscious... This can be experienced asleep or awake.

PP. And perhaps while painting?

AE. Yes, especially by painting. I use the act to access archetypal realms. It takes me there.

PP. Is it hard to come back to reality? Don't you wish you could stay "there" forever?

AE. It is where I feel most at home. The ordinary has always been a bit hard for me but I try very hard to see the extraordinary in the ordinary, to experience less suffering in life.

PP. And you do it so gracefully. It seems that everything, everybody you touch turns into poetry, art and magic. Your paintings are the mirror of yourself and this wonderful dream state you are talking about. They are also part of so many collections and houses around the globe, I think I can understand now why that is the case.

AE. You can only know that because you are magic yourself! But thank you. There is a beautiful quote from Blake "We are on this earth a little spell to bear the beams of love." I feel Art is about this sensual connecting to others and our own deepest regions. Love motivates me utterly.



PP. Love should motivate us all. That way this world would be even more beautiful place. Are you happy?

AE. Yes, very happy. To wake every morning and know that there is the possibility of giving love and being loved and making work that might cause another to feel their soul enliven is such a gift.

PP. Oh Alexandra, I adore you!

AE. And I adore you dear Predrag. And thank you for our beautiful connection.

PP. What are you working on at this very moment?

AE. A painting of a large chair in a room with one large egg sitting on another, poised precariously on the chair. The eggs are made from old plan maps from 1899 of Brooklyn, New York. As you know I love working with found materials, ie old Chinese scrolls, texts from all over the world...

PP. Why is that?

AE. It must be about a sense of history, that these materials have had interesting lives. I love the wabi-sabi aesthetic of going toward decay, the transience of it all.

PP. Merging old and new as reading Blake and transforming his words into your own visions. It is like learning from old masters and then communicating that knowledge in contemporary way. I think you are a messenger Alexandra.

AE. There is so much to learn from the past and it is so exciting to be in the present. It gives you a sense of the Eternal... past, present and future as one.



PP. Do you have a favourite colour?

AE. It changes all the time. Right now it is a muted lavender.

PP. So you are a true rainbow girl.

AE. I just saw one in the vast New Mexican sky of late.

PP. That must be a good sign.

AE. Everything is always signaling! This you, of all people, know.

PP. I also know that you love movies. Is there one, you can choose as your absolute number one?

AE. That is hard to do. I am slayed by the films of Andrey Tarkovsky.

PP. What is your date of birth?

AE. November the 2nd. I am a double Scorpio. So was Picasso and Georgia O'Keefe as well as Björk.

PP. What a combination? I've been told that double Scorpio is the wildest one in bed.

AE. Let's just say sex is very large in our lives.

PP. Can you see yourself in 10 years from now?

AE. Not really, I have always lived very much in the moment and to envision even a month from now is not easy for me.

PP. What excites you?

AE. Simply being alive, seeing, eating, loving, reading, ideas, consciousness, breaking open, sensing fear and joy, abandoning reason, poetry, going beyond myself, stepping into my own destiny... on and on... seeing luminosity in matter... breathing, entering the studio.



And I dream of a different soul  
Dressed in other clothes:  
Burning as  
From timid  
Spiritous and less  
Like fire it to the earth,  
Leaves lila on the table  
To be reme

Run along don't fret  
Over poor  
Bowl your chop chop along  
Whip it through the world,  
So long as ever after pitch  
With cheerful tone and cold  
In answer to you take  
The earth sings in your ears.





PP. What is your biggest hope?

AE. That I have passed on joy and passion and tools to bear adversity to my children. That my connection to Soul is strong and that it might connect to others share of soul as well. To always recognise the inherent radiance that abounds and to stay alert to, as Henry Miller says, "truth is paradox".

Paintings: © Alexandra Eldridge

Text: Predrag Pajdic