

Mielikki

mixed media on panel

155 x 99 cm including frame 2022

Millie is a legend. Everything about her is legend. She is known never to shake hands. Instead, she looks a person in the eye and states:

“Mielikki, master of forests and the hunt, wife of a forest spirit, mother of Nyyrikki and Tuulikki.” When in a good mood, she is known to add “said to have played a central role in the creation of the bear.

No one has seen her at work. She disappears for days, sometimes months on end and just when gossip about her whereabouts starts to tip sideways, she’ll suddenly stand in the door of a bar, silencing the crowd, leaving them strung with anticipation.

When asked where she’s been, one of the stories she’ll tell is that a local hero offered her prayers, gold and silver so he could catch the ‘fabled elk’. Once, she claimed to have been asked to protect cattle grazing in the forest of a far-off

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country it is thought very important to stay on her good side. Rumor has it she is also offered prayers by those who gather mushrooms and berries, but she doesn't like to talk about it and will not thank you for asking about it.

As mythical as her own stories might be, Mielikki IS known as a skillful healer of paws of animals who have escaped traps, helps chicks that have fallen from their nests and treats the wounds of other helpless creatures. She knows the healing power of herbs and will even help humans if they know well enough to ask her for it.

MILLIE is the protagonist of her own story. She does what she does, there's no changing that. And she's alone in life. There's no changing that, either. Believe me, she's tried.

But that is fine. It's great, actually. When she's at work, the mind wanders. Even though she loves doing what she does, it does get something of a drag, doing what she does, day in day out. Year after year.

So, she started making up stories. Adventures. And when she'd have a couple of days of, she couldn't wait to tell the people she knows about her adventures. And so she did. And they loved it. And they believed it. And why shouldn't they? Her adventures are very real. And very much hers. And her alone. And she wants to share them. They're just too good to remain untold. To remain untrue.

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Chris Berens

Chris Berens studied illustration at the Academy of Art & Design in 's-Hertogenbosch, graduating in 1999. He has developed a complex and time-consuming painting technique, mostly shown as mixed media on panel.

"I'm most comfortable using fine brushes and drawing inks and graphites, but I also regularly use water color paints, markers and acrylics", Berens says. "For some time now I've added digital image making to my line of techniques, meaning 3D sculpting, digital painting and image processing. I combine and mix them with my more traditional media."

After his first major solo show at Jaski Gallery in 2005, Chris Berens' fame spread quickly. The young artist has already exhibited all over the world, from Amsterdam to New York, from Tokyo to Los Angeles, Seattle and Singapore. He also designed the cover for Panic of Girls, an album which was released in 2011 by Blondie. Deborah Harry and Chris Stein, founders of the band, are admirers of his work.

Back home Chris has been the subject of a television documentary. Chris Berens, Master of his Magical Universe was made for Dutch broadcaster Avro's Close Up series in 2013 and has since been broadcast several times at home and abroad.

Chris Berens also featured prominently in the television documentary Krabbé searches for Van Gogh, in which actor/painter Jeroen Krabbé traced the path of Vincent van Gogh in co-operation with Dutch artists.

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