

ORPHÉE LOLA MONTES SCHNABEL — I have been writing for *The|End.Magazine* since its very first issue, back in 2006. Over the years I have developed a process I think goes perfectly with the mood of the magazine.

I don't like to build up a standard interview, or say the things readers would normally expect. I've come to the conclusion that the best way to overcome this technical hitch is asking the people I interview to tell me something about their life, their childhood, anything significant that happened to them when they were a child or a teenager. Basically whatever really shaped their personality and is behind what they're doing now. In practice this means I ask them to write (or tell me when I have the chance to meet them in person) a brief bio of themselves. Just the very way they write it is significant to me, the topics they chose, the little things they decide to focus on... I like to leave them free and not push them in any direction.

HUNTER OTHERS

Only after this first step am I able to collect the information I need to put together a more intimate interview.

Now, the process with Lola was quite unique. I wrote my standard e-mail to Lola, introducing myself and explaining my process of doing interviews – unfortunately I couldn't take a plane to New York to talk to her face to face. She replied right away from her iPhone, telling me she liked my approach and that she would write to me in a couple of days. It was a very good sign; I thought that the half the

job was practically done. So I awaited her e-mail, and time passed with anything significant in my inbox; I started getting a bit worried because the deadline was getting closer and closer so I decided (doing something I never like to do) to write her an e-mail in which I warned her that we were approaching the deadline. Again, no response. I had begun to think the article a lost cause when I woke up one morning and I found her e-mail. Astonishing. She wrote me the best, the longest, the most intimate – even with a title – short bio I have

ever received. I had the feeling right away that IT was the article.

So this is it. I have just copied and pasted her e-mail. I have left it on purpose how it was, without any editing, in the hope that you get the same sensation I got when I first read it. If you get the chance, read it one morning as soon as you wake up.

interviewed by **Alessandro D'Ottavi**

photographed by **Julian Hargreaves**

THROUGHOUT THIS EXISTENCE SO FAR, I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE MANY ENCOUNTERS WITH HUMAN BEINGS OF SUCH MAGNITUDE, IMPRESSION AND WIT. WHEN I WAS 15 AND FIRST STARTED EXPERIMENTING WITH SMOKING, I WAS SITTING ON A STOP ON 5TH STREET AND NOTICED MANY CHARACTERS RINGING THE BELL OF A BUILDING WITH A DRIED ROSE HANGING ABOVE THE DOOR NEXT TO THE BAR THE SCRATCHER. I FOLLOWED A GROUP IN AND UP A 6 FLOOR WALK UP INTO A

TRY ONE LAST TIME GIVING THE HOME TEST ALL I GOT. I SPENT A MONTH MAKING THINGS THAT WOULD FIT INTO THE 20X10 ENVELOPE THEY PROVIDED KNOWING THAT THIS TIME IF I DIDN'T GET IN THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD HAVE DONE BETTER. I ALSO CHANGED MY NAME TO LOLA BEAURANG (MY MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME) AND GAVE A PO. BOX AS MY RETURN ADDRESS. I THOUGHT THEY WERE NOT TAKING ME SERIOUSLY BECAUSE I WAS THE DAUGHTER OF... AND WOULD

AROUND IN A ROOM TRYING TO MAKE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL IMBUE WITH ONE'S MAGIC WAS OK. THAT I COULD BE EMOTIONAL IN MY CRAFT AND THAT NOT EVERY ARTIST HAD TO BE AS GREAT A THINKER AS DUCHAMP.

I WISH FOR YOUNGER FEMALES THAT ARE PASSIONATE THE ABILITY TO OFFER THEMSELVES COMPLETELY TO THEIR WORLDS... IT SEEMS THAT MEN ARE DRAWN TO YOU FOR THIS VERY POWER AND SLOWLY TRY TO CRUSH OR TAKE IT AWAY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO HAVE

At 13~14 I looked like Jodie Foster in Taxi Driver...

MANS APARTMENT HE CALLED THE KITCHEN. THIS MAN WAS JOHN FISK. RECORDING WIZARD, POT DEALER, POET AND A PROFOUND SPIRITUAL GUIDE. A HIPPIE WHO RESEMBLED HALF WILLIE NELSON HALF WALRUS HALF SANTA CLAUS HE HAD RECORDED THE POETRY READINGS AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS AND INTRODUCED ME TO BUTOH DANCE, THE JAPANESE NOH PLAYS AND PRINTS OF GHOSTS AND INDIAN TANTRA ART. MY DREAM SCHOOL FOR UNIVERSITY WAS THE COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART. IT IS A FULL SCHOLARSHIP AND I WAS REFUSED ACCEPTANCE TWICE. AT 22 I DECIDED TO

SLACK OF LIKE SOME SPOILED BRAT DEBUTANTE.

I GOT INTO THE SCHOOL AND WAS LUCKY TO MEET ONE OF THE GREATEST FEMALE SCULPTORS ALIVE THE EPITOME OF NEW YORK, WITHOUT AN ENTREPRENEURIAL BONE IN HER BODY MY PROFESSOR AND FRIEND NIKI LOGIS. I WAS ENAMORED OF THIS WOMAN'S RHETORIC SO MUCH WOULD I TAKE NOTE OF ALL SHE SPOKE IT SEEMED THAT I HAD BEEN WAITING MY WHOLE LIFE TO MEET A LADY AS PROFOUND AS THE MEN I HAD APPRECIATED.

SHE OPENED MANY DOORS IN MY MIND AND ART, ALLOWING ME TO ACCEPT THAT STUMBLING

BOUNDARIES AND CREATE COPING MECHANISMS IN A WORLD WHERE THE EXCHANGE OF YOUTH FOR KNOWLEDGE BECOMES SO PRIMAL. IT TAKES TRUSTING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS TO OPEN YOUR SOUL TO THEIR TRUTH AND RAISE YOU UP IN YOUR OWN CONSCIOUSNESS WITHOUT STEPPING ON YOU.

ONCE ONE REALIZES THAT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS UNLIMITED AND YOUR ACTIONS ARE IT BECOMES EASIER TO ADJUST TO HUMAN INSTINCTS AND WORK WITH YOURSELF IN THE PUREST WAY. ONLY THEN ARE YOU AT YOUR BEST AND CAN PASS THE WAND TO THE NEXT TO COME...

EXCHANGE OF YOUTH FOR
KNOWLEDGE

BY ORPHÉE LOLA MONTES
SCHNABEL
AKA
PARIMALA
(FRAGRANT ONE)

WHEN I WAS BORN, I WAS COVERED IN HAIR RESEMBLING ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. MY FATHER WAS UNCLEAR BY MY PHYSICAL DARKNESS IF I WAS HIS. COULD MY MOTHER HAVE HAD AN AFFAIR WITH A MEXICAN CONSTRUCTION WORKER BUILDING HIS STUDIO AT THE TIME OF CONCEPTION? SO HE WINKED AT ME AND I BLINKED BACK TWICE. THIS WAS OUR CONFIRMATION.

I WAS A LOVE BABY. MY PARENTS WERE FILLED WITH ABSOLUTE CONVICTION AND CERTAINTY WHEN THEY MET & MADE ME. THEY HAD FOUND ONE ANOTHER AND IF YOU LOOK AT EARLY PHOTOS OF THEM THEY LOOK LIKE BROTHER AND SISTER.

I WAS BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO DRAW. AT TWO YEARS OLD MY FATHER WOULD SHOW ME SMALL BLACK AND WHITE IMAGES OF PAINTINGS IN THE NEWSPAPER AND I KNEW THEY WERE HIS. I AM DYSLEXIC AND HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY SO LEARNING WITH A VISUAL DIALOGUE HAS RESONATED.

AS A LITTLE GIRL I HAD A VAST IMAGINATION, MY MOTHER WOULD BRING ME TO THE MUSEUMS IN BELGIUM WHERE SHE IS FROM TO LOOK AT HIERONYMUS BOSCH, DURER, BRUEGEL AND MEMLING... I NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE SO SHE WOULD PICK ME UP 5 HOURS LATER, I WOULD DRAW IN MY NOTE BOOK. THESE PAINTINGS DID NOT BELONG TO THE MUSEUM THEY BELONGED TO MY OWN PERSONAL LIBRARY AND I HAVE MEASURED MYSELF EVER SINCE BY THE COMMITMENT OTHERS HAVE SHOWN TO THEIR WORK. WHEN I MAKE A

WORK OF ART IT IS IN DIALOGUE WITH THE COSMOS OF BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS IN HISTORY NOT FOR MY CONTEMPORARIES ONLY. I PLAYED WITH IMAGINARY FRIENDS ALONE FOR HOURS. MY FAVORITE THING TO DO WAS TO SET UP PERFORMANCES AND INCLUDE MY LITTLE BROTHER, VITO, IN THE FINAL ACTS, BY DRESSING HIM UP AS A GIRL, HE WOULD ALWAYS DESTROY THE FINALE BY TEARING OFF HIS COSTUME AND RUNNING AROUND NAKED WITH THE LIPSTICK ALL SMEARED. THIS WOULD UPSET MY PLAN AND I WOULD BE RUSHED TO BED IN TEARS.

MY PARENTS SEPARATED AT THE AGE OF 7 AND REMAINED THE CLOSEST OF FRIENDS I'VE GROWN TO APPRECIATE THIS BREAK BECAUSE IT PROVIDED ME WITH AN UNINHIBITED NATURE THAT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CULTIVATED UNDER THE CONTROL OF MY FATHERS ROOF.

AROUND MY MOTHER'S KITCHEN TABLE WERE ECCENTRICS AND GREAT THINKERS. RENE RICARD THE POET, DAVID MCDERMOTT THE ARTIST, LAUREN HUTTON THE ADVENTURESS. THESE PEOPLE GOT UNDER MY SKIN AND ARE AS MUCH A PART OF ME AS MY PARENTS. I HAVE PRACTICALLY EXPERIENCED THAT A MENTOR MUST PICK YOU AS MUCH AS YOU HAVE SELECTED THEM FOR THEIR KNOWLEDGE.

ONE SPRING WHEN I WAS 13, I WAS WALKING OUT OF THE DENTIST AND STANDING ON THE CORNER OF LAGUARDIA PLACE & HOUSTEN A STRANGE LOOKING MAN WITH A PAGANINI FACE & PIERCING BLUE EYES MOUNTED ON A BICYCLE MUCH TO SMALL FOR HIM APPROACHED ME. HE SAID HIS NAME WAS VINCENT GALLO. HE ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO GET A JUICE WITH HIM. I SAID I HAD TO MEET MY FRIEND UP THE STREET AND CONTINUED WALKING. HALF WAY DOWN THE BLOCK SOMETHING IN MY CURIOSITY AND GUT STOPPED ME TO TURN BACK BUT HE WAS

GONE. THE VERY NEXT DAY I RAN INTO HIM AGAIN ON WEST BROADWAY AND HE ASKED ME IF I WOULD LIKE TO READ FOR A PART IN A MOVIE HE WAS IN.

I NEVER GOT THE PART BECAUSE I WAS TOO TALL AND NOT RIGHT BUT WE'VE HAVE REMAINED FRIENDS TO THIS DAY AND HE HIRED ME TO BE HIS ASSISTANT. SO AFTER SCHOOL I WOULD GO TO HIS APARTMENT AND HE WOULD SEND ME ON ODD JOBS. ONE WAS SHREDDING ALL THE CLOTHES HE WAS DISCARDING WITH SCISSORS. HE DID NOT WANT PEOPLE WEARING HIS STUFF THAT THEY FOUND IN THE GARBAGE. VINCENT MADE ME A LINE OF CLOTHES CALLED "JUST FOR HER". THESE WERE DRESSES AND TWO PIECE SKIRTS AND TOPS HE WOULD PICK OUT OF THE TRASH OR AT GOODWILL TAILOR TO MY FIT AND NAME, PLACING LABELS WITH HIS AUTOGRAPH IN AS MANY LOCATIONS AS POSSIBLE. AT 13-14 I LOOKED LIKE JODIE FOSTER IN TAXI DRIVER, ARRIVING AT HIS DOOR STEP WITH BABY BLUE CAT SHAPED EYE SHADOW WHITE PATTEN LEATHER CLOGS AND MINI SKIRTS THAT SHOWED OF MY MOSQUITO BITTEN BRUISED ENDLESS LIMBS.

VINCENT HAD ME CALL ALL HIS EX GIRLFRIENDS ONCE TO RETURN ART HE HAD GIVEN THEM FOR AN EXHIBIT HE WAS DOING WHICH WAS AN AWKWARD TASK. WHEN THEY DID NOT RESPOND TO MY CALLS HE HAD THEM ON SPEAKER PHONE APOLOGIZE TO ME, WHICH WAS HUMILIATING ON BOTH PARTS BUT GOOD TRAINING.

I WATCHED HIM HUSTLE HI-FI EQUIPMENT ON THE PHONE AND WITH INTENSE DRIVE AND PERSISTENCE DO EVERY THING HIMSELF TO THE FULLEST. HE TAUGHT ME THAT IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING YOURSELF IT WILL NOT BE DONE EFFECTIVELY. RENE RICARD TAUGHT ME THAT IF YOU CAN'T GIVE AND HELP YOURSELF YOU CANNOT DO SO FOR OTHERS.

