

'Molly Soda Art Exhibition', 1883, (January 2016)

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MOLLY SODA ART EXHIBITION



Molly Soda, It's so crazy that you live in a computer now, 2015
NewHive page and YouTube video, 0:31 min
2AP + Edition of 3

She likes to call herself a “webcam princess”; yet Molly Soda is more than a mere “Internet sensation”, and her debut solo show proves it.

A digital artist with a penchant for social media, Soda makes works that are specifically designed for an online environment and audience. Relying on a well measured mixture of wit, cheek and lowbrow net culture, her art employs what we may call a “glittery tween-Tumblr aesthetic” to tackle issues of self and female identity, question conventional beauty norms and reflect on the dissemination and treatment of our own personal image on the web (earlier this year she has caused quite a stir when she intentionally “leaked” her own nude selfies on [New Hive](#) to draw attention to the matter).

Buoyed up by a steadily growing number of online followers (over 30.000 on **Instagram** alone, not to mention **Tumblr** and **Facebook**), Molly Soda has travelled all the way from Detroit (where she is currently based) to London for the opening of *From My Bedroom to Yours* at Annka Kultys Gallery, which, for the occasion, has been repainted in pink to look more akin to the artist’s own room/work space. Running until 16th January, the exhibition brings together an array of GIFs and videos (also, *ça va sans dire*, available online) that depict Soda undertaking a diverse range of activities from her home or expressing her emotions. While creating a powerful, intimate connection – a *voyeuristic* bond of complicity, we may want to say – between the artist and the viewer, the artworks on display serve a second purpose: to prove – if proof were needed – that Internet art can actually be fit for an “offline gallery” environment.

Born in 1989 in Puerto Rico, Molly Soda received a BFA in Photography and Imaging from New York University in 2011. Ranked twenty-fourth on Complex magazine’s Most Important Artist of the Year list in 2013, Soda has had her work exhibited in numerous group shows in the US and Canada.

Despite having a degree in photography, you are best known for your web-based work; what made you turn to Internet art?

It was sort of a natural progression for me. I grew up with the Internet and started blogging from an early age, around 13 or 14 – so I was used to sharing my life and photos of myself online. I went to school for photography I think purely because I didn't know what kind of art I wanted to make but I knew I liked taking photos. Over time, I learned more about performance, video and web-based art which I became more drawn to. I was already sharing my life online so it was natural for me to also share my work online. Everything sort of came together steadily, over time.

As with many artists of your generation, the Internet has become an indispensable tool in your creative practice. What was your first encounter with the medium? And how has your use of it changed or evolved over time?

Like I said, I've been using the Internet since I could remember – so it makes sense that I would feel comfortable incorporating it into my art practice. It wasn't really until I took some web design classes in college that I started to think about websites as art pieces – for example sites like [superbad](#) and [jodi](#). That blew my mind – I wanted to make work that existed on and for screens – I wanted to make websites that weren't "functional." In the beginning, I was making websites like the aforementioned superbad and jodi by coding and using Dreamweaver. It was time consuming and I wasn't sure how to easily share or show them to people – then NewHive came along and completely changed the way I make my work. The site has made it a lot easier for me to make the work I want to make and incorporate different media within a screen (without having to code).



Molly Soda, Witch and Famous 2015
NewHive page and .gifs
2AP + Edition of 3

In your work, you address themes of self-identity and feminism; what does being a feminist mean to you as an artist?

My work is feminist because I identify as feminist (shouldn't everyone?) and my work is primarily about myself. Obviously, I feel that many can relate to the contents of my pieces but I am using my body and my image as a tool to illustrate these things.

It seems to me that the rise of the Internet has dramatically amplified the importance of self-identification and identity (for instance, it has been pointed out that the web would be interfering with the way we define and see ourselves through a shift from being "internally" to "externally" driven). What in your view is the role of the medium in defining/altering our self-identities?

We are all operating under avatars online – to varying degrees. We can choose to be as sincere or as anonymous as we want. I'm trying to be as open, sincere and honest as possible when I interact with the Internet and portray myself – but it's still curated to some degree, whether or not I'm totally aware of it. I'm sick of having to differentiate between IRL and URL – neither mode of representation is "more true" than the other. Every bit and piece that you share online is still very much you.

The show includes 20 digital pieces made this year, 2015. All of the work also resides online – whether it's on YouTube or NewHive or even Facebook. I've always thought my work was best viewed at home on your laptop, iPad, cell phone, whatever... so I wanted to make the gallery feel a bit homey. The walls in the gallery are pink – similar to the wall colour of my bedroom back home in

Detroit. Everything is pink and warm and inviting and a bit messy, like your crafting supplies exploded all over the place. I wanted to literally take my bedroom, my studio, and put it in the gallery. The pieces are all simultaneously playing on different screens, mimicking multiple tabs being open on your computer – which can be a bit chaotic – but I like to think most of us live in some form of organized chaos.

How do you like London? Is this your first time here?

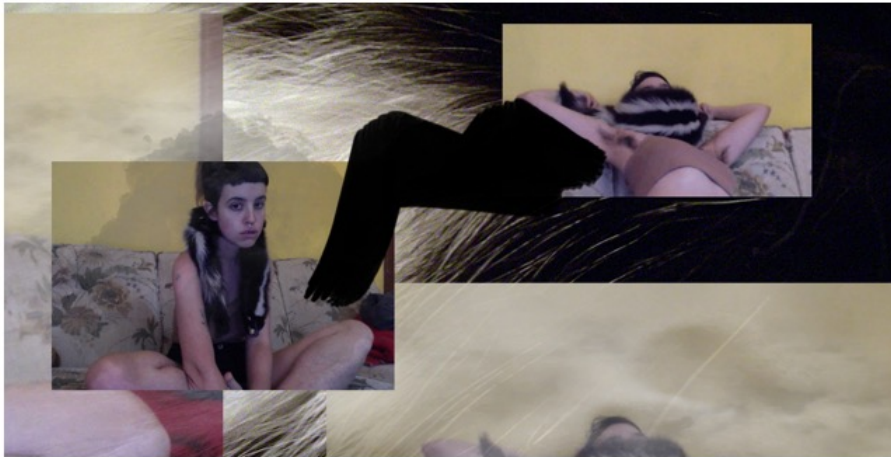
I love it here! It's my first time as an adult, so essentially, yes. It's been really nice to get to come here, do the show, explore a little and to meet some Internet friends IRL finally!

What other interests do you have outside art? What is your typical day like?

It's hard because on a typical day I'm usually making work. I'm honestly not happy and feel very anxious when I'm not working on something. If I do really want to distract myself – I'll go for a walk with a friend, watch YouTube videos, dance around my living room, sit on my porch and read. I spend a lot of time alone.

As a last question, what's next for you?

After London, I'm headed back to Detroit and then to Puerto Rico – where I was born and where my family is from – for a month. I have a new body of work I'd like to start working on there. I'm also working on a few books with some artists and have plans for more shows... IRL.



Molly Soda, *Is it alright if I don't answer the phone today?*, 2015
NewHive page
2AP + Edition of 3

***Molly Soda: From My Bedroom to Yours* will be on display until January 16th 2016 at Annka Kultys Gallery, 472 Hackney Road, Unit 3 First Floor, E2 9EQ London**