

Ntuen, Koko 'Molly Soda', Ladygunn, October 2015

<http://ladygunn.com/culture/molly-soda>

## Molly Soda

Posted by [LADYGUNN](#) on Tuesday, October 6, 2015 · [2 Comments](#)

[Like](#) 176 people like this. Be the first of your friends. [Tweet](#) 13



*interview / Koko Ntuen photos / Anna Bloda*

Digital art star **Molly Soda** is sitting in an oversized sweater in an oversized chair, with an oversized stuffed teddy bear in the background, in a pink walled room when our connection clears on Skype. Her hair is a little disheveled and it looks like she just woke up or has that cool bohemian art house look down to a tea. Her voice has that octave that sounds like she needs more coffee, her tone is afflicted with bored but endearing accents, in a way most people in her generation sound. They have seen it all. With google as a reference it's impossible not to.

Despite the never ending sounds and voices of so many people in the digital stratosphere Molly has made it to the frontier lines of that world for her engaging and deeply personal work that includes explores self-identity and self depreciation, feminism, culture, and perversion. From her uninhibited selfies, her raw emotions and her uncategorizable take on the modern world, with Molly Soda everything she puts out is a bit surprising, a bit alarming and a bit real.

### **What's it like living in Detroit?**

I really enjoy living in Detroit. I moved here 2 years ago. I kind of randomly ended up here. I was living in Chicago and wanted to leave and came here to visit and check it out and and I liked it so I stayed.

### **What about your upbringing, what was it like growing up in Indiana?**

It was interesting. I grew up in Bloomington, a college town. My parents were both professors, it was pretty much a good experience. It was not so much a small town vibe because it was a college town so I could go to shows and all that but once I turned 18 i had to go.

## **ANNKAKULTYSGALLERY**

### **What was the moment when you got into digital arts?**

I actually didn't know I wanted to do art and photography until a lot later in high school. I had access to a camera, my dad had a really crappy 2 pixel digital camera. I started taking it everywhere taking photos of myself. I had already been online blogging on Xanga and LiveJournal. I was really into LiveJournal specifically. I would post all my photos there and I started following other girls on there. I was always using it as sort of a hobby and then my Junior year of high school I took a photography class and that's when I really got into photography. I was posting my art online but I didn't see how what I was doing would be something that I could be doing now.

### **Your in this new generation of artists where it's unclear on how to monetize art. How did you rise above this and have people find value in your work?**

I always put my work out and actively put out stuff everyday. I think it had to do with being persistent, and that I did grow up on the internet and I already had the background of blogging, then going into an art school. I always did everything online anyway. When I started my Tumblr in 2009 that sort of escalated, but I feel like between 2009 and 2011 I was seen as an internet personality and less of an artist and that was really frustrating me because I have an art background but people just cared about how I dressed.

### **How do you stay balanced when so much of your work in on the computer?**

There are some days where I am on the computer way more than other days, I don't like to spend a whole day in front of the computer obviously, unless I have a deadline, but for the most part I try to get out and see other people. I'm always connected though, even if I'm out with my friends I'm always on my phone there is always some level of technology with me. It wasn't until I was in college that I got into texting and my first iPhone was 3 years ago.

### **There seems to be this group of girls you Tavi, Arvida, how would you describe the scene? Everyone is sort of booking you guys as these feminist art stars.**

I think it's interesting that they do pitch it that way, I think that its become really trendy, especially in the past couple of months, like all these "hot" girls showing work together. It's super frustrating, especially with some of the other girls I've been following for years, and now I see them getting more press and recognition but it seems insincere and takes their work out of context almost.

**For me I feel its like the media putting it's nose in something again so it can package and sell it. "Oh feminism! "Cyber Punks!" "The New!" But it's always the same dialogue with these pretty white girls telling their story and**

Yeah, on one hand I'm like oh good I'm getting press, but the other hand I'm like I don't really want to be packaged this way and I don't like that it's happening this way. I've been thinking about this a lot and I haven't really talked to other girls about it but I do wonder what they think.

**What are your thoughts?**

I mean, I think it its a trendy way to package things and feed it back to men essentially. I feel like they aren't giving it to the people who actually want it or consume it.

**There is this diverse group of millennials that is a beautiful rainbow of people and cross all barriers. The diversity is not represented in the media. Thats what the media does though, 'We are going to write about you, you and you and now you are a group.' Its a weird dynamic between the old and the new.**

I feel like this is what happens a lot when media covers things – they are always repackaging repurposing and normally it's for more clicks.

**Whats been the hardest and easiest part about being so open on the internet?**

I feel free. The weird thing is that its harder for me to open up to someone IRL than it is for me to put stuff out on the internet. That way i don't feel like I am burdening someone and people can tune in or tune out of whatever I am broadcasting. That is helpful and I feel like it's a better way to have a broader conversation with people about something I feel like I'm getting more out of it because these people are choosing to participate. I never want to feel embarrassed about anything so thats probably why I put myself out there. I don't allow myself privacy so it lets me deal with those issues differently. The only time I don't share is if it involves an interpersonal relationship.

**Does your audience ever influence what you are willing to share?**

**I think that alienates other people.**

ANNKAKULTYSGALLERY

I definitely get insecure about sharing certain things but it's usually when I'm trying to impress someone. I'm thinking specifically if I have a crush on someone and I know that they are going to look at my work and then imagining them thinking, 'I can't believe she did that, I'm not attracted to her anymore.' But now I feel like doing that is not true to myself so I made a conscious effort not to do that. It's like viewing myself through someone else's eyes. In terms of my audience I don't think they ever expect anything from me. The way I've been online has evolved a lot but the internet is so neatly archived so you can go far back. I think that my work has evolved. A lot of my work has become more sincere in a positive way. Years ago I felt like I was making fun of people or myself , I'm pretty self deprecating but I try to do it in a way that's not hurtful now.

**What do you parents think about your art?**

I don't know. I'm pretty sure they read my twitter. I'm friends with them on Facebook. I wasn't for a while because I wasn't comfortable with it. My mom sometimes comments on little articles or

something. I mean they are definitely aware, I got fired from a job years ago and posted on Twitter and they called me like, 'So you got fired today?'

### **What do you have coming up?**

I have a solo show in London in November at the Annka Kultys gallery in East London. It will be all digital work, a lot of work is already online but I'm doing other little things for the show.

### **What was it like being part of the first ever Phillips digital art auction in 2013?**

That was actually the first piece I ever sold. Lindsay Howard was curating and approached me and asked if I wanted to do a piece for it. I had a piece from 2012 called *Inbox Full* which is me reading every single message in my Tumblr inbox. That one is a 10 hour video broken up into parts. She really liked that piece so I did another one for the auction without taking any breaks or stopping the camera. That came out to about 8 hours. That experience was amazing, it was the door that opened up the rest of my life. My first art world event, my first piece sold. It was the first notion that I could sell my work.

### **What older artists inspire you?**

I'm mostly interested by female artists, mostly performance artists that I grew up reading about and studying. Cindy Sherman, Carolee Schneemann, Ana Mendieta, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramovic. Those are some people that I was learning about in art school that stuck with me.

### **What was the most "WHAT?" moment you can think of in your career.**

I got named one of the best artist of 2013 by *Complex* and I was like, 'What is this? Why did this happen?' All of 2013 was pretty eye opening. I had been out of college for two years, had this retail job, thought I was never going to make money as an artist and that I would keep doing what I was doing. I left my job that same year, moved to a new city and started focusing on making work. When you decide to go for it and it pays off, that feels pretty good.