

Haynes, Marianne. «Molly Soda: From My Bedroom to Yours», February Stationery. (24 November 2015): <http://februarystationery.com/2015/11/24/molly-soda-from-my-bedroom-to-yours/>

February Stationery

NOVEMBER 24, 2015 · 10:42 PM

MOLLY SODA: FROM MY BEDROOM TO YOURS



If you have ever googled “Tumblr famous” or used the Internet, then you’ve heard of Molly Soda. The Detroit-based digital artist uses Youtube, Newhive, Tumblr and other platforms to produce and share a number of work mostly based around herself at home. Her work is chaotic, charming, and often melancholy – Soda has produced several videos where she cries or sings alone to the camera while hanging out at home. Her apparent candour and performance of the self is iconic.

I'm a fan, and I can't pretend not to be. Soda's complete commitment to her art and girls spoke to me, and made me feel a little more confident in myself as someone who never quite grew out of being a teenaged girl. As a woman who grew up with the Internet, my entire life was public. Bebo, MySpace, MSN...the way in which I presented myself online was everything, and was at odds with my diary at the time. I recently made the choice to publish my diaries online via Newhive, the antithesis of what my twelve year old self would have wanted.

When I arrived at Molly Soda's exhibition: FROM MY BEDROOM TO YOURS at Annka Kultys gallery in East London, I wasn't sure what to expect. I expected a lot of pink, glitter, and kitschy aesthetics. I was not disappointed. The small gallery space had been painted pastel pink and filled with pink tables, pink TVs, and technology. Every space held an iPad, MacBook or iPhone with Soda's work playing, some with sound. Dido's White Flag played over, and over, and over (as it did in my youth). The space was covered in glitter, diamonds, flowers, teddy bears, and the youthful aesthetic that has become synonymous with Soda's art. The work itself, some of her most iconic videos and Newhive pieces from over the years, is delightfully at odds with the 'girly' pinks. It speaks of the real juxtaposition that happens within young women, wherein we feel such intense sadness and pain in intimate girly bedroom spaces.

I was lucky enough to speak to Molly (not her real name) at length, but I wasn't journalist enough to record it or indeed prepare interview questions. In conversation she was shy, sweet, and insightful. We spoke about digital art and she was happy to educate my novice self. We got into the nature of art, and what is it? Who decides what is tasteful, or correct? We came to the conclusion that anything can be art, but that we both connected more with more modern art that spoke to our experience. I posited that it's nice to feel a genuine connection and know that you aren't the only sad girl crying in your bedroom. We talked about how hard it can be to connect with traditional art, and how important it is to have art that does speak to us. Soda spoke eloquently and passionately about Shia LaBeouf's #AllMyMovies project and the participatory, community experience that his piece became – bringing everyone from all over



the world. We talked about finding old diaries, and how to choose which names to omit or keep. I was surprised to hear that even with time, she was still embarrassed about their contents, but liked to share. I told her about my own Newhive diary pieces, and she was enthusiastic, asking to see a link to them.

“I want to read your diary!”

What followed was just a chat between young women: about tween diaries, hoarding craft supplies, diamond tablecloths, and moving around a lot with pets. Soda was nothing but sweet, funny, and intelligent. Her work is kitschy, fresh and important – it speaks to a new generation of women who grew up with their lives intensely private in journals, but conversely public in cultivated profiles. Molly’s recent project *Should I Send This?* In which she self-published her own nudes, was cause for a huge amount of controversy and online vitriol. This was of course, the latest in a long line of Soda’s work to bewilder and anger (often male) critics. But as far as her fans go – we like Molly Soda because she *knows* us. Her work opens up important dialogues on adolescence, taste cultures, self-expression, and art. She is happy to embarrass herself in ways that we never could, but we feel a connection to her experience because it’s ours. Molly Soda knows what it feels like to wait for a boy to come online, and that’s why she is so popular.