

They can acquire an animal appearance, they can fly and even cast flames through their eyes. Those are a few of the super-powers our fiction heroes have. The little ones and grown-ups in the house have, at some time or another, dreamt of having those superhuman qualities. What would it be like to be able to travel in time?

The fact that superheroes have some kind of weakness, their own Achilles' heel, brings them closer to us. Almost anyone could be one of them. It is precisely this feature, among others, what has motivated an enormous enthusiasm and fascination about comics, together with what they represent and to their particular style and aesthetics. So we are surrounded by these superpeople in films as well as in advertising, design, fashion or art. There is always a good reason to make a superhero be put in appearance!

Sandra Chevrier, for instance, shows a gang of superheroes in her series titled *Cages*. We find around one hundred portraits of young women with the appearance of 'femme fatal', masked with classic comic pages. Through those masks we can see their captivating look, and at certain moments, it is their lips that become a seduction device. The intention of this young Canadian artist is to send a message of female liberation, from her studio in Montreal. That is, she insists on fighting against intricate and artificial prejudices that lead the female figure to the self-demand of constant beauty and perfection.

Sandra has always felt absolutely hooked on and attracted to art, especially when, at the age of 14, she starts working for the art gallery Yves Laroche in Montreal. At the same time, she discovers the work *Detritus of Devotion*, by Heidi Tailefer, which moves her so much so that it makes her cry, and encourages her to try to provoke the same feelings in her future followers. From here onwards, she becomes a professional in an autodidactic way. She studies Visual Arts and Media in Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM), and later she will continue to develop her tireless work on portraits, which still exists today.

Her portraits have different sources of inspiration. If we go as far as her childhood, Dali, Mucha and Frida Kahlo were her most important referents. As she grew up, she found new contributions from Kent Williams, James Jean and Josh Keyes. Her mates and friends from Montreal, such as ClockShovel, among others, were also of great relevance for her.

Wherever we look, we will find an undeniable mastery in the use of the paintbrush in her works, though honestly, my favourite works are the ones made on paper. To be more precise, in the series *Cages*, the freshness of the watercolour is remarkable, as well as the use of the pencil and acrylic paint. Gesticulation and the process of creation made upon half-format surfaces can be inferred. Those strokes bring us nearer to the manual creation.

Chevrier highlights the accessibility to her work as one of her priority goals. Working with comics, apart from having fun making collage, she can incorporate a part of pop culture to her works. In one of her last exhibitions titled *POW! POW!*, together with the Russian artist Lora Zombie in the gallery Phone Booth, they both displayed an atmosphere which quickly recalled the worlds of superheroes. There were details everywhere in its opening on the 10th of August; personalized cookies with easily recognizable icons from the world of comic, Lora's style and clothes while she was drawing some pictures live, the merchandising lighting-shaped rings, or the audience, who got very involved in its role. Exhibitions should be a WHOLE, since their strength comes from them as a whole.

And now that I mention exhibitions, Sandra's portraits are travelling all around the world, from Canada to the United States, Australia, Norway, United Kingdom, Spain...

Super-powers... I have to admit that, up to now, I have not been able to cast flames through my eyes, but somehow Sandra Chevalier has allowed me to travel in time. She has taken me to the early 20th century, since her comic masks are quite reasonably similar to *Las Señoritas de Avignon* by Picasso. She has taken me to the middle 20th century because we cannot forget the images taken from the comic by Roy Lichtenstein. More or less at the same time, Andy Warhol disguises himself as Robin, Batman's loyal partner, and makes a photographic report. I have travelled to the late 90's because Vanessa Beecroft makes her performances with her erect Caucasian women, who seem to have their own gang. I have travelled to yesterday, thinking of the suggestive collages by famous photographers such as Damien Bottière and Ernesto Artillo. And she has taken me to the present, because the works which allude to the comics by my friend Jonathan Notario are worthy of the pain.