



peut
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Issue 4

PORTFOLIO



Self-portrait by Aron Wiesenfeld

Aron Wiesenfeld
www.aronwiesenfeld.com

Aron Wiesenfeld began his career as a comic book illustrator, and after a few years drawing superheroes, decided to study at art school. What was the comic world's loss is the art world's gain, as he is emerging as a highly talented and well-known allegorical figurative painter.

His works are arresting and asks the observer to imagine the history that lies behind these characters.

Often depicting figures apparently caught or lost in some kind of overwhelming backdrop, he is drawn to empty spaces that may appear lonely, but it is that back story he is interested in.

Aron says about his work "If something is going on behind the surface, people are drawn to it but don't know why. They've connected to something in it. And that is a constant theme through my work, the ability to paint something to suggest something that isn't shown."(...) "I think it is necessary to leave unanswered questions in a painting... if it is not fully knowable, the truth it holds changes over time and the painting becomes like a living thing".

Interview Nathalie Malric - Intro & Translation Clarice Chian

Peut-Être : *Hello Aron, everyone draws as a child. Did you always draw or did you come back to it later as a teenager or adult ?*

Aron : I just kept drawing, with a lot of support at home (from my mom) and being very inspired by comic books. I loved comics like Daredevil and The X-Men, and I would spend hours meticulously copying them. Being "the guy who could draw" was a big part of my identity in school.

PE : *I read that when you were younger, you got a job as a comic book illustrator, which was your dream, and that it was a very disappointing and frustrating experience. Can you tell me more about that ? I apologise for making you repeat something you already talked about, but I found it very interesting.*

AW : I started in the comic book business in the mid 90's, when American comics went through a financial bubble ; speculators bought up millions of copies of everything that came out. The response from the comic companies was to hire anyone who could use a computer, and pump out as many comics, as fast as they could, so the quality went down to an all-time low. That made it very difficult to make a good final product, which was frustrating, though I didn't know why at the time. I also think I just lost interest in the subject matter. There seemed to be a limit to what you could do with it. The thought of being 50 years old and still drawing "Wolverine" was incredibly depressing ! I don't mean any disrespect to comic book artists, but that was what I felt.

PE : *How did you feel ? Did you feel your dream was over and you had no more dreams at all ? How confusing was it and how did you get through this ?*

AW : I guess it was confusing, in the sense that the magic of comic books was gone. I had peaked behind the curtain, and found it to be very lacking. But it was also an invigorating

moment because it opened the opportunity to reinvent myself, and seek inspiration elsewhere.

PE : *Which artists do you find inspiring ? And what do you like about each one of them ?*

AW : I go through phases of loving certain artists. Right now I'm really excited about these small paintings that Goya did of bandits in caves. There is a lot of suggestion of violence, but the details are obscured by the darkness, leaving the worst of it up to the viewer's imagination. I find it absolutely intoxicating when an artist leaves that opening for the viewer to participate in the telling of the story. Goya did that so well in his later, more personal work. Generally, right now I find I'm very drawn to scenes of twilight and the mystery of near nighttime, by artists like Whistler, Millet and many others.

PE : *Are you inspired by literature ?*

AW : Yes, I take single images that jump out at me from books, and those are often the starting points for paintings. As an example, there is a dilapidated, overgrown house described in Murakami's "Wind Up Bird Chronicle", the image triggered the thought - what if there was a woman lying on the porch ? I was interested in the possible explanations of that scenario, and I'm working on a painting like that now. I like open-ended images that can be interpreted in many ways.

PE : *Your characters are very mysterious ; seem very lonely, sometimes in danger, both strong and vulnerable.*

When I look at them, I feel like I'm in "the twilight zone", in a more feminine and teenage way. Do you imagine a story / background for each one of them before you start a painting / drawing ?

AW : Not before I start. My inspiration is usually emotional, not based on a story that I want to tell. The initial idea isn't even

an "idea", more like an instantaneous flash from something I saw, or read. I usually don't know the reason why it struck me; only that it hit something down deep. Then I sketch the idea, and mess around with it to try to distil that strong feeling that I had. The subsequent decisions are likewise trying to get closer to that feeling, and to express it. Understanding the feeling, in my experience, is not particularly useful for the creation of an interesting painting. When the painting is finished, I like to think about the stories that could be behind it, but at that point I'm a viewer, just like anyone else looking at it.

PE : How important is painting and drawing in your life ?

AW : Probably too important. I sometimes feel that my own sense of self worth is only as good as the last painting I made. If I tell you any more about that, I will have to be lying on a couch !

PE : Can you tell me more about your dreams, upcoming projects ?

AW : I'm very excited about making a book of my work so far, and I've been to talking to a couple of publishers about that. I have a few gallery shows scheduled in the coming year. It's very difficult to predict the future of the work itself because most of the decisions I make are intuitive, based on what I'm feeling at that moment.

Flood





WIESENFLÜGEL

The gathering

*“How important is painting and
drawing in your life ?*

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The delegates daughter



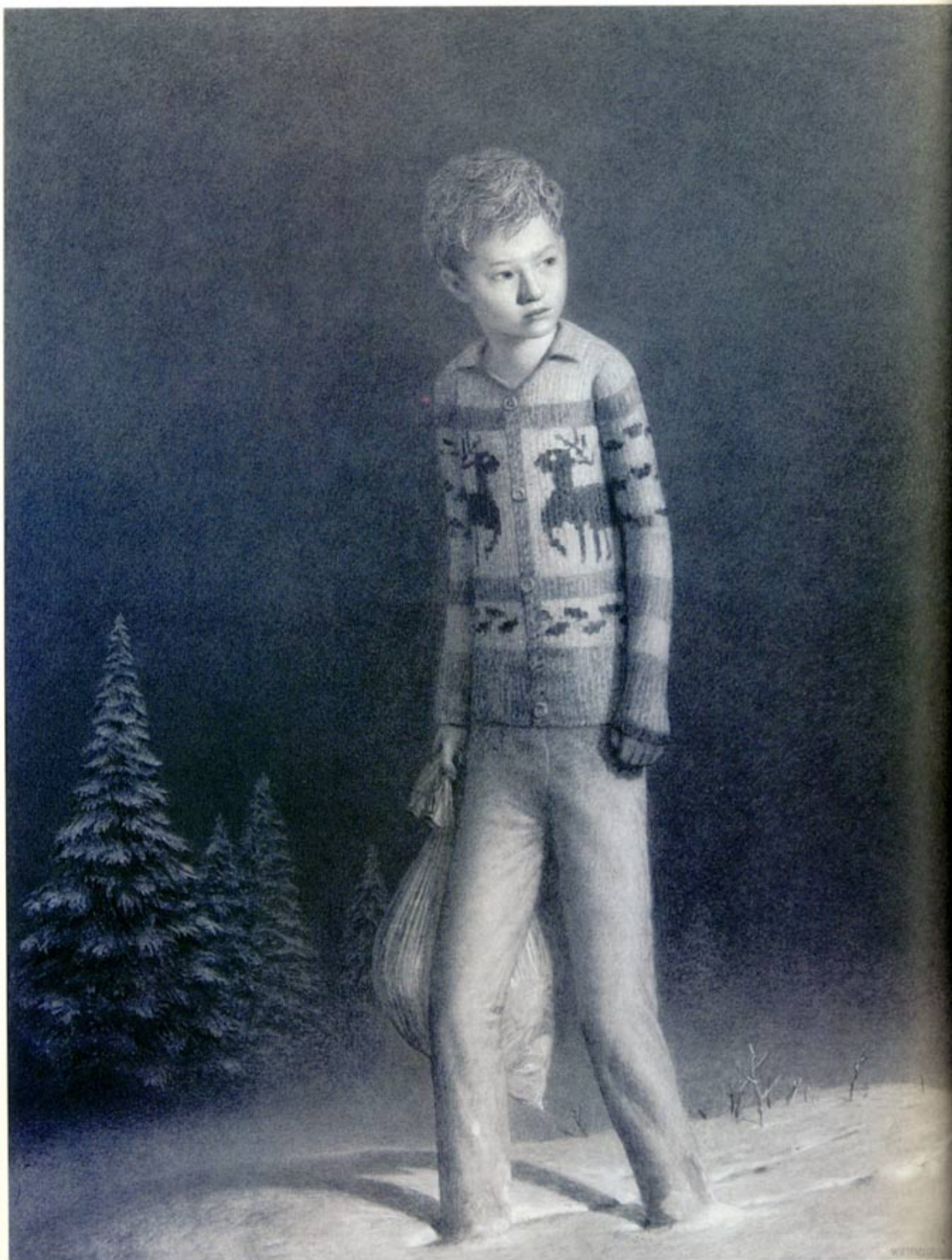
WIESENFELD

Immigrant



WIESENFELD

Clear lake



William



Birthday

