

ART

## Advertorials for Myself

**D**O YOU THINK MY ART SUCCEEDS BECAUSE people can relate to my narcissism?" Kerri Scharlin wonders, surrounded by pictures of Kerri Scharlin on a StairMaster, Kerri

Scharlin drinking Evian, Kerri Scharlin in bra and panties.

"Is it a normal kind of narcissism?"

Kerri Scharlin wonders, standing at the center of the José Freire gallery in SoHo, amid the opening of "Interview," featuring huge reproductions of *faux* magazine profiles—as they

would appear in *GQ*, *People*, *Vanity Fair*, the *Star*, *Mademoiselle*, *Premiere*, *Self*, *Psychology Today*, *Vibe*, *Vogue*, *Interview*—all commissioned by Kerri Scharlin and edited by Kerri Scharlin and about Kerri Scharlin:

KERRI, KERRI, ILLUSIONARY SCHARLIN'S WEB KERRI, KERRI, ON THE WALL

This not-normal kind of narcissism, this Scharcissism, is all for sale; for \$300 to \$5,000, which does not go to the writers (Phillip Lopate, Jesse Kornbluth, Ron Rosenbaum, and Glenn O'Brien among them) or photographers (including Annie Liebovitz, Richard J. Burbridge, and Timothy Greenfield-Sanders) or designers who did all the work but rather to Kerri Scharlin, because, Scharlin explains, "this is my art."

"I offered each a token amount," she says. "In some cases, it was cookies." In others (Rosenbaum's, Kornbluth's, Lopate's), it was more, and she won't elaborate. But getting back to the point, "I'm interested in myself," Scharlin says. "I'm exploring the contrast between the reality of me and the me that

would come through in a packaged or airbrushed version." Last year, Scharlin staged "Wanted," for which seventeen friends described her to police artists. She sold those too.

At the opening, surrounded by her glossy selves, Kerri Scharlin ponders her Scharlin-ness. Some of the profiles are harsh, stinging. She pulls at her hair. "I guess I learned

that I emphasize body image more than I'm aware of. And Phillip Lopate, for instance, thinks I'm a bad artist."

Here's Lopate now. Scharlin points him toward his work, which has been art-directed to resemble *Vanity Fair*. While he kneels before it, she says, "Phillip is such a great writer, but he turned in 35 dense pages. I had to edit it." He's just learning this now.

Lopate takes her aside. He tells her he wants to print the piece elsewhere. No, she says. That spoils her concept. Finally, they part. "We worked it out," Scharlin says. He declines to comment.

Here comes Jesse Kornbluth, who can't wait to see his piece. But something ghastly has happened.

"Jesse turned it in too late for me to have it completed in time," Scharlin explains. "I really liked his piece, so I feel doubly bad."

Kornbluth points out that he still hasn't been paid. "It was an interesting show," he says, "but I'm not interested in learning anything more about Kerri Scharlin."

Meanwhile, José Freire, the gallery owner, is beaming. He's sold seventeen prints in 36 hours. Which is his favorite? "In one of the pieces, someone asked her this amazing question. The answer was Brad Pitt," he says. "Or was it Johnny Depp?"

BOB ICKES



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