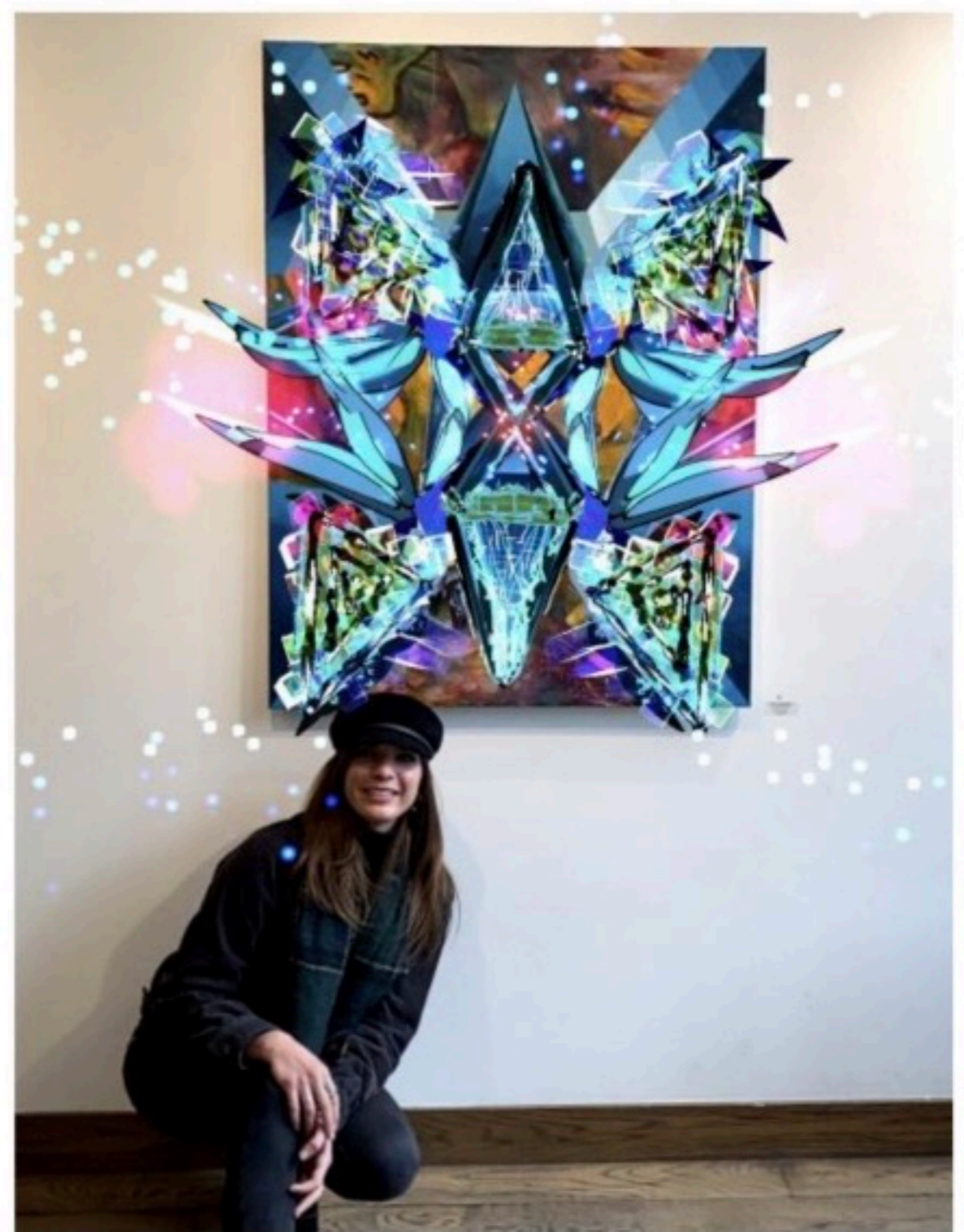
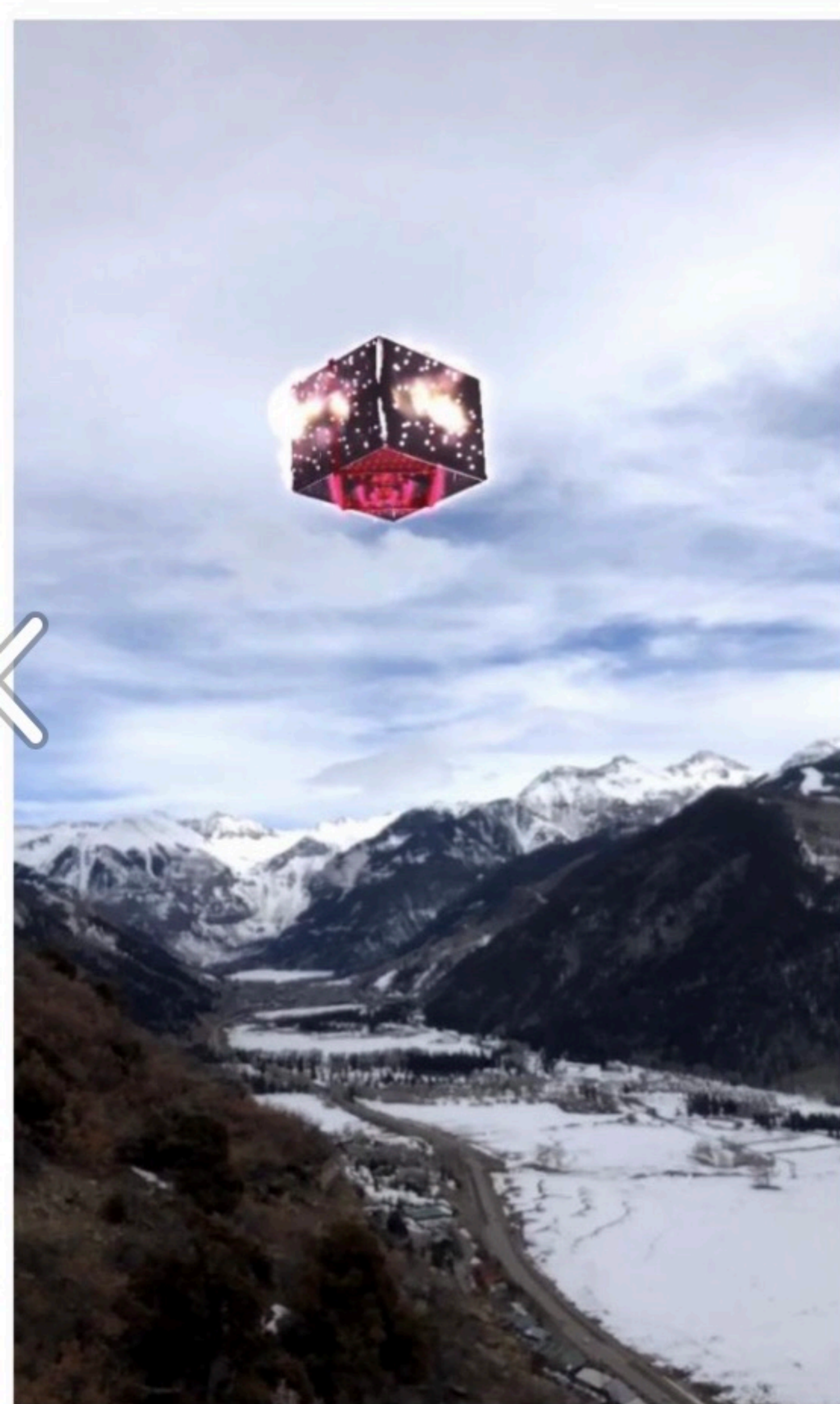


MINDBENDER ART

The Work of Brooke Einbender by Shannon Liddy



Author Elizabeth Gilbert once posited that inspiration is in search of a conduit. For genius, a life energy responsive and ready to absorb, to engage. And from our first conversation, and my subsequent dive into her catalogue, that sentiment captured Brooke Einbender's journey with such specificity.

Studio art and painting her major at Wake Forest University, Brooke found herself immersed in a world conducive to its very growth. Receipt of the prestigious Presidential Scholarship for Visual Arts distilling and solidifying her passion and upon the swift heels of 2017 graduation, an opportunity presented itself to work for collector Phyllis Hattis, steeped in history, awash in classical treasures, 20 million dollar masterpieces splashed across walls. Tales of the late William Rubin echoing down the Picasso-covered corridors, his 25 year history as director of MOMA the soundtrack over which Phyllis narrated, augmenting the very environment with a richness. A texture. Advising curators and national museums, liaising for political leaders and those holding high office, the world of the art elite welcomed Brooke's keen eye, adept nature and impulse to learn and to lead. With a minor in Entrepreneurship and Spanish, she was in her element, business acumen and integrity driving forces. Yet amid this year saturated in substance, cultural marvels within fingertip's grasp, she found her own practice stymied. The hustle of the city (while wild and enigmatic in tone) not beneficial to her personal output.

And so she wandered, curiosity and soul her guide, exploring her storied surroundings. Williamsburg her cobblestoned footpath, searching for something alive. Spring eternal. Not relics of master's past, but of a creativity aflame. Energy. Palpable pulse. That wild hum. And perhaps by destiny or animal magnetism, Carrie Able gallery emerged, enveloping her with a gentle cadence and within whose eponymous walls she would thrive. Quickly establishing a role on the team under the multi-disciplinary director after whom the space was named, synchronicities her storied signposts, Brooke found herself tangentially embedded in a residency. An incubator of sorts featuring a Virtual Reality lab in the Bowery and within a wild embrace she fell deeply captive, it was a playground for a mind yearning to create. To test theories and push the envelope. Move past self-imposed boundaries, unencumbered to explore with aplomb. And with this foray into virtual reality, a new world unfolded before her very eyes, consciousness reexamined, pin-prick sensations her guide. Staggered by the palpable impact.

Sometimes we need a spark. The whisper of the wind, a means by which to make a move. One literal or perhaps transcendental. Perhaps both. And so an answer to a grant



proposal submitted to Telluride Arts not only arrived but awarded her the title page to her next chapter. Imagination alit, ready to create not only from a material plane but one with more depth. More texture. A nuance not achieved in the 2D from where she began long ago. VR headset and laptop her implements, Colorado her newly adopted home, Voodoo Studios her laboratory, she embarked upon her first series of augmented reality oil paintings. Striving to approach without roadmap nor plan, all judgments cast aside, allowing the process to unfold organically. To be overtaken by the moments. Reactionary in the very space in which she now inhabited. For Brooke to explain it, "I put on my VR headset, and am immersed in 3D blank space. I import an image of my oil painting into VR and using my remote controls, I am able to paint off the canvas in 360 degrees. It's as if I am painting sculpture and expanding the layers of paint off my canvas and into a 3D environment that one can immerse themselves in."

Inspired by fractals and sacred geometry, vivid colors of the rainbow and the mind's piqued curiosity, her works are staggering. And with them she wants to blow minds. Break them open. Stir souls so fiercely nary a dry eye exists, background, foreground, all elements of tangible form lost in the sweet bliss of wonder. And it's not merely a parlor trick. Not a bait and switch to gain likes, status or notoriety. It's a means to move. To jar both physically and spiritually. To propose vistas yet unexplored, a vast world open to engagement. To inquiry. An opportunity to flip every truth we've held dearly. Because comfort fails to teach. Stagnation stymies the soul. A spirit suffering in abject silence and shrouded fear the subsequent drone of the masses.

And so she heeded this tug in March 2020, accepting her first solo exhibition at Gallery 81435 in Telluride. Showcasing her series of Augmented Reality enabled oil paintings, a classroom of sorts, bending minds and hearts of patrons ready to absorb. A teaching ground as an innate student of the world giving license to share what she'd gleaned, spreading sweet visual gospel to the audience.

But as we know, unmuddled paths don't entice an imagination wild with whimsy. One seeking. One yearning to expand. And while the upending unleashed by the COVID pandemic threw her from a proposed trajectory, it would not dim her shine. It is true that in order to abide by safety protocols, gallery doors closed sullenly and swiftly only two weeks after welcoming the world. Classroom lights dimmed, hushed tones, blinds drawn. But it is also true that she embraced the pause. The keen reflection on the very



breath of existence. Spinning straw into gold, allowing the universe to show her what she'd been missing all along.

And so that brings us to the present captivation. A fresh take. Time allocated to landscapes anew and unexpected, metaphorical doors through which to pass, physical frames at her feet, the burgeoning collection the fuel. Scavenging reclaimed artifacts from Telluride discard piles, beautiful specimens that carry history and story, she's amassed 60 physical doors endeavoring toward 100 to build an installation of grand scale. And as part of this artistic vision, creating a virtual world of portals and NFT collectibles for each of the 100 frames. Tangible installation merely the beginning of a 5-year global physical and virtual project, The Unknown Zone. Bridging the gaming world, physical art world, and virtual art world.

These passageways? They are gateways to new vistas. Often representing change. Death and life anew. A closing. An opening. Fresh opportunity afoot. And recognizing this universal truth, she wants to galvanize these experiences. Seminal moments of witnessed change. Of transition.



Memories indelible, the universe doing what one cannot do for oneself. An urged goodbye to those facets that no longer fit. And as if by magic or perhaps spirit's manifestation, she found her vehicle. Telluride Arts grant her fuel, Camp V and WE Arts her playground, she has accepted the role of artist-in-residence on the boutique campus in Naturita. A beautiful backdrop between Moab and Telluride upon whose sprawling 110 acre property this concept is given life to expand. Intentions to cohere and reconnect the community through education, art and shared space. To revive the heart of the locals and instill agency. Ownership. Pride in the land and the opportunity to create. A wild amalgamation of energy to behold, also giving back to social and environmental causes. Because while intriguing and endlessly vast, it is widely known that NFT and digital work is not without its downfalls. Climate change an overarching reality, these spaces contribute to its degradation and as

a fervent activist and deeply rooted soul, Brooke wishes to counter her footprint, offsetting however possible. As such, the proceeds from the physical installations will be donated to an environmental cause tied to the land upon which it is situated as well as benefiting local artists who participate.

A teaser. The journey thus far is merely a taste of the enormity yet to come. And the opportunity to bear witness in real time is a gift she's openly offering us all. Dare I say stay tuned? Or shall I implore you? Beg you to give yourself over to the magic of this mystery. Allow your minds to be blown. Whiplashed with wonder. Left in a beautifully contemplative haze, bodies reverberating from the soul's deep palpitations. I know I'll be joining the chorus of the intrigued and awakened citizens yearning to thrive and I do so hope you'll tag along.