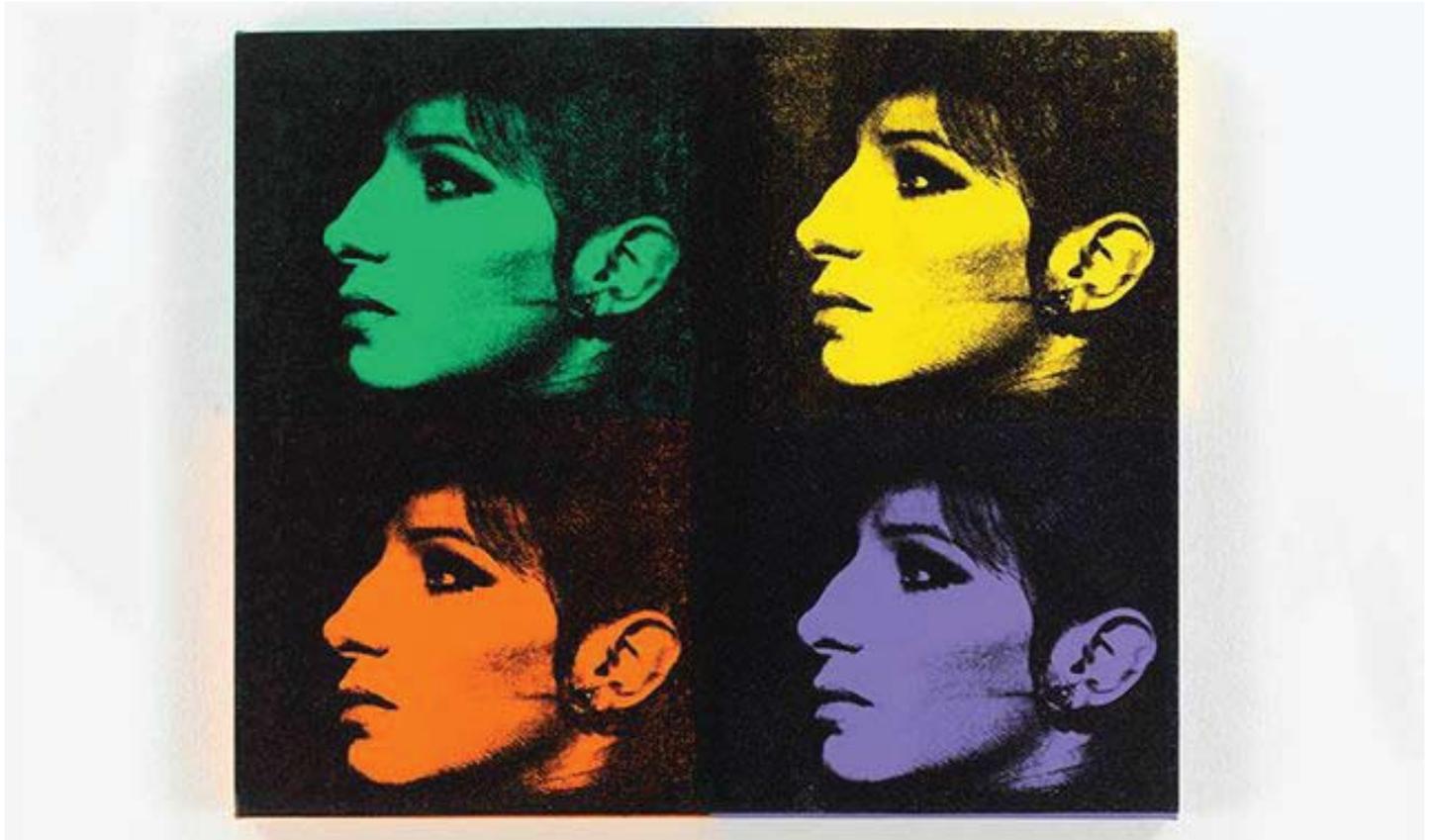


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Deborah Kass on Barbra Streisand, Jonathan Schwartz, and "The Good Wife"

by Ashton Cooper 19/05/14 2:11 PM EDT



Deborah Kass's "4 Barbras (The Jewish Jackie Series)" (1993)

(Courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin)



Deborah Kass

(Photo by: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders)

Name: [Deborah Kass](#)

Age: 62

Occupation: Artist

City/Neighborhood: Brooklyn, New York

You were recently honored by the New York Foundation for the Arts. How does it feel to be inducted into their Hall of Fame?

Fantastic. It is wonderful to be in the company of Fred Wilson, Andres Serrano, and Christian Marclay, who were the first three artist inductees. My NYFA grant in 1991 was crucial to my development, so I am really so grateful to NYFA for that support and this honor.

Paul Kasmin showed your "4 Barbras" series at Frieze New York. You called Streisand a role model in your NYFA acceptance speech. I'd love to hear more about how Streisand has been a role model.

I also mentioned Hillary Clinton and my grandma Jeannie Kaufax. Barbra is an artist. She is uncompromising, true to her vision, original, ambitious, political,

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fantastically philanthropic, and creative. She challenges herself constantly. It doesn't matter what your opinion is of her work, she is one of the most successful female artists who ever lived. She has done it being absolutely true to herself. Barbra is one of the top charitable givers in Hollywood. And my god, she is almost single handedly funding the major research being done on women and heart disease and personally responsible for raising public awareness! (Not to mention all the other causes the Streisand Foundation funds.) But you should definitely ask Beyonce about Barbra. I am pretty sure Barbra is one of her role models, too.

Do you know if Streisand has seen the “Barbra” works?

Yes, she owns one, a “2 Silver Barbras” painting.

What project are you working on now?

It might be best described as “feel good objects for feel bad times,” because so far it is mixed media.

What’s the last show that you saw?

Rochelle Feinstein’s “Love Your Work.”

What’s the last show that surprised you? Why?

I was pretty shocked when Will got killed on “The Good Wife.” Didn’t see it coming. The blogosphere went crazy the next day.

Describe a typical day in your life as an artist.

I wish there was such a thing as a typical day. Get to the studio around 10:15. Sometimes have breakfast at Little Purity Diner in Park Slope with Pattie for a “breakfast meeting,” as we love to call them. Get to the studio, work, organize, answer email. Work out for hour in the studio. Eat lunch. Work.

Do you make a living off your art?

Yes.

What’s the most indispensable item in your studio?

The Jonathan Schwartz Show stream at thejonathanchannel.org

Where are you finding ideas for your work these days?

The Jonathan Schwartz Show stream, Ryan Murphy, Beyonce. Always Sondheim.

Do you collect anything?

Art.

What is your karaoke song?

I cannot sing, to my life-long disappointment. Not even in the shower.

What’s the last artwork you purchased?

Robert Indiana’s beautiful print; one of The Hartley Elegies” from Artspace commemorating Marsden Hartley, his lover, German Officer Baron Von Freyburg; and Hartley’s abstract painting, all at once.

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What's the first artwork you ever sold?

"Dogs Come Home is The Rain." When I was 20. It was a cross between Jim Dine and Jasper Johns with a cartoon twist. Katha Politt's parents bought it.

What's the weirdest thing you ever saw happen in a museum or gallery?

At the moment almost everything seems weird to me.

What's your art-world pet peeve?

Right now I don't have a single pet peeve.

What's your favorite post-gallery watering hole or restaurant?

Bottino. I am old school.

Do you have a gallery/museum-going routine?

No, I don't have a routine.

What's the last great book you read?

"The Blazing World" by Siri Hustvedt and "Act One" by Moss Hart

What work of art do you wish you owned?

Titian's "Venus of Urbino."

What would you do to get it?

What's opposite of acquisitive? I definitely don't want to own it. Too much responsibility!

What international art destination do you most want to visit?

Waiting with bated breath to see the prehistoric cave paintings in France and Spain this fall.

What under-appreciated artist, gallery, or work do you think people should know about?

There are entire categories of humans who are underappreciated in the art world, as they are in the real world, starting with a huge category: women.

Who's your favorite living artist?

Too close to call.

What are your hobbies?

What's a hobby?

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