

# Interview

## Enter Ariana Papademetropoulos' Gucci V-Day Dreamscape

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Ariana Papademetropoulos. Photo by Alexandra Cabral.

Los Angeles has a new patron saint, and her name is Ariana Papademetropoulos. According to the artist, a dreamy romanticism permeates her native city—the sea, the occult, and Old Hollywood find their way into her towering surrealist paintings in the form of opalescent conch shells, glowing crystals, and enormous chandeliers. In an art world largely devoid of such flights of fancy, Papademetropoulos is in high demand. This fall, she curated *The Emerald Tablet*, an acclaimed exhibition of fairytale scenes by Papademetropoulos and her fellow L.A.-based artists at Jeffrey Deitch, and a solo show at New York's Vito Schnabel gallery soon followed. It's no wonder, given her penchant for fantasy, that Gucci tapped Papademetropoulos to create a limited-edition zine this Valentine's Day. The artist delivered—the zine, inspired by '60s Spanish-language fotonovelas, stars a miniature Papademetropoulos, and is complete with star-crossed lovers, gentle giants, and the House's latest collection of accessories. Today, to mark the zine's release, we sat down with the artist for a conversation about good parties, bad signs, and locking eyes with Larry David.

INTERVIEW: What inspires you?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Traveling. Other people's art.

INTERVIEW: Tell us about the zine. How did this project come to you?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: I had just done a zine to accompany my exhibition at Jeffrey Deitch, and after that Gucci approached me. I collect these Argentinian fotonovelas. In Spanish speaking countries in the '60s, they would make book versions of movies instead of dubbing the films. I think they're beautiful art pieces, and I've always wanted to do one, and Valentine's day felt like a perfect opportunity.

INTERVIEW: What is your favorite part about collage?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: It's a way of creating a different reality in a lo-fi way.

ARIANA PAPADEMETROPOULOS

INTERVIEW: What are you interested in right now?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: I've been fixated on unicorn tapestries. I'm researching them a lot for my next series of work.

INTERVIEW: How did the zine come together?



Photo courtesy of Gucci.

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: It was a wild project. The storyline was influenced by the pieces we had to shoot. It's about a giant and a fairy, who travels to this world of tiny creatures who are her own size. It's kind of a fairytale, like Thumbelina. My friends were saying that fashion is never humorous. I wasn't trying to be, but there is definitely a humor to it.

INTERVIEW: There's a strong sense of irony.

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: I love fotonovelas because of their irony and kitschiness. I definitely tried to keep it all in balance, because I could definitely have gone overboard. [Laughs]



Photo courtesy of Gucci.

INTERVIEW: When do you like to work?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: First thing in the morning.

INTERVIEW: What was the last great party that you went to?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: My friend's wedding. I made eye contact with Larry David.

INTERVIEW: What is the last embarrassing thing you did?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Oh man. I ran out of gas in the driveway of the Chateau Marmont.

INTERVIEW: What's your favorite outfit?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: A white fur coat and heels. I've had the same white fur coat since I was 17, and I can't get rid of it.

INTERVIEW: What's on your phone's lock screen?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: A painting by Agnes Pelton. It's a reminder of beauty, and why I'm doing what I'm doing.

INTERVIEW: Do you ever doubt what you're doing?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Well, you get caught up in the logistics sometimes, and that can make you forget about the actual art. It's good to remember the source.

ARIANA PAPADEMETROPOULOS

INTERVIEW: What was your favorite moment in the process of making the zine?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: An artist friend of mine, Isabel Albuquerque, was the bird. She always embodies animals in her sculptures, and so it made sense that she would be the bird. My work is like—yes, I make paintings—but I really try to create realms for those paintings to live in. The people in my life are an extension of those realms, so it was nice to have Isabel participate. It creates an alternate reality.



Photo courtesy of Gucci.

INTERVIEW: What was playing in your head when you were immersed in this story?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: We are making these little film vignettes too, and I set it to this album by Gaspard Augé that's very '80s. That fits pretty well.

INTERVIEW: Iconic. What's your favorite restaurant?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Musso and Frank.

INTERVIEW: How often do you call your parents?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Every day.

INTERVIEW: What's your favorite movie?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Probably *Donkey Skin*.

INTERVIEW: What's the biggest red flag in a relationship?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: If he has too many paintings of himself in his house.

INTERVIEW: What's the third picture on your phone's camera roll?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: It's of a man holding a baby leopard, from this book on costume balls. I'm throwing a party soon and I was looking for inspiration.



Photo courtesy of Gucci.

INTERVIEW: What does it take to throw a great party?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Combining worlds, making sure that the people there don't know each other. If you know everybody, it's not fun. You also need good music, a theme, and an element of surprise.

INTERVIEW: What was the last gift you received?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: My friend found me a Cocteau drawing at the estate sale of the guy from *Harold and Maude*.

INTERVIEW: In making the zine, did you turn to any surprising sources for inspiration?

PAPADEMETROPOULOS: Actually, my favorite children's book was my main inspiration. It's called *The Little One*, and it's from the 1950s. Dare Wright was a female photographer who often used herself as a subject. It's a children's story, but told through a series of photographs of dolls. In one of them, the doll takes off all her clothes and meets these bears. It's really twisted and it looks like art. I really love things that aren't meant to be art, but are anyway.



Photo courtesy of Gucci.