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Interview with a Dead Friend: Dan Asher

by Barry Kostrinsky



Why only interview the living? This is an interview with Dan Asher who passed several years before I wrote this. It is an attempt to channel his spirit and to reveal how he would respond and give depth to this great artists complexity while hinting at explanations of who he really was.

Barry Kostrinsky: What is your name, what is your quest, what is your favorite color
Dead Dan Asher: My name is Dan Osher, I changed it to hide from some shit. My quest is to seek the real among the muck of mankind. Black is my favorite color.

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BK: What do you want to tell us from the other side

DDA: Barry, it's not the other side

BK: What do you mean?

DDA: It all just, is, the past, the present, the future, I see clearly now and am here.

Can we go for sushi and can I have uni?

BK: Yes, my friend, same spot in the LES, my treat.

DDA: Well, not exactly your treat, you bought my art dirt cheap.

BK: Yes, I did.

BK: What makes an artist great?

DDA: Barry, there is no great, no good, no bad, these are silly terms, you should know better by now.

BK: Why did you create art?

DDA: Does it look like I could do plumbing?

BK: Your apartment was a mess, it saddened me so to see it, with the pills strewn about, the art all over the place, the books piled high everywhere, what happened to you?

DDA: I sold my apple stock too soon and ran through my inheritance.

BK: You once said you were not a photographer yet your photos of random birds in flight are sublime, the icebergs you shot off Greenland are beautiful and the bloody fight scenes of wrestlers adds another dimension. How are you not a photographer?

DDA: I just took pictures. I don't develop images, care for the specific camera body nor lens nor do I speak to the history of photography. I just press a button.



BK: What medium or media were you most comfortable in?

DDA: Comfort is not a part of art.

BK: What media did you like most?

DDA: Like is for eating cakes and sushi.

BK: Why did you start singing and getting into music towards the end of your career?

DDA: What end, my career is just beginning. However music offered to touch my soul deeply and more properly the question is why didn't I do it earlier in my career. Come on Barry, do I have to do all the work here?

BK: Yes.

DDA: Well, you're gonna have to pay for that privilege then.

BK: Anthony Haden-Guest was/is a big fan of yours and introduced us. What do you think of AHG?

DDA; He's cool.

BK: elaborate please.

DDA; He is cccoooooIIlll.

MARTOS GALLERY

BK: Can Anthony Draw?

DDA: He is learning.

BK: Which artist do you respect most?

DDA: none, all, none, all, none, all

BK: Just one name?

DDA: Jean Michel, he liked my work too, you know.

BK: You sang of hatred being everywhere a few years before you passed and now with Trump in office you seem to have foretold the future.

DDA: Yes.

BK: What is your summation of the art world?

DDA: 743

BK: Why did gallerist run from you when we walked in Chelsea to see shows?

DDA: Because they didn't have a car nearby to zip away in.

BK: Did you irk some people?

DDA: hopefully.

BK: Matthew Higgs from White Columns gave you a show not to long ago, what did you think of him?

DDA: He should have given me a show sooner.

BK: A Movie has been made about you.

DDA: People will see anything to make them feel alive in their dead worlds. Who's the dead one, me or them?

BK: Is that rhetorical?

DDA: Explanations will cost more.

BK: You softened up whenever I saw you spoke to a pretty lady. Though a brute at times, you were the softest guy I knew at times. Why the polar pairing?

DDA: Are you the same shit always? I am still a guy.

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BK: You once jumped out of a taxi after ordering it to stop in the middle of a street when you didn't like what a friend of mine, a great and very real photographer like yourself said about politics, why?

DDA: I didn't suffer the living lightly.

BK: What does it look like from up there?

DDA: It is not so much an up here or down there thing and more of an inside thing. It looks much the same, ants running around to and from the mound not knowing what they do.

BK: What advice would you give artists and humankind today?

DDA: I'd tell the artists to get the proper value for their art work and not to sell to low. I would tell the world to wake up and see the connectedness of all things, not just art and to go for a walk and shoot oil in water puddles as I once did in your driveway.

BK: Thank you for your time.

DDA: your welcome, I look forward to you joining me one day soon.

BK: I'll take a rain check as there is much to do and say here for a long while to come but look forward to our reunion, shall I bring some oil sticks?

DDA: We don't need that here, we paint with thoughts and ideas. You'll like it here and everything is sold to the universe as soon as it is created. There are no dealers, no critics, no press and no collectors, just artists.

BK: Sounds like a cool place