

IN YOUR FACE



Guru Adrian by David Art Wales from Stiletto Magazine

David Art Wales, creator of Guru Adrian, has lived in New York City for two years. MAISLEY is a great friend and admirer of Mr Wales, she spoke to him recently about his life in the Big Apple.

M What did you do today?
D It's really hot out so I went to play pool in the morning, because it's air conditioned there. Now I have to get a special glove because I hurt my wrist.

M Doing what, pray tell?

D Excessive use. You know, working. I also have to deliver my paintings — the 14 stations of the cross. (My favourite being Veronica (yes, of the Archies) Wipes The Face Of Jesus). Now I need to shoot them onto transparencies. I work in two dimensions. Everything I produce gets shot onto transparencies and video. The original is on a TV screen and becomes

a working model. It's an inversion. So you can in effect buy a videocassette of 100 screenprints by me. One of the reasons I don't eat a lot is that my money goes into keeping everything premium quality. I'm fortunate I work with really good people too.

M Didn't you have a patron for a while?

D Yes — George Betsis (Sydney Advertising Mogul and Good Mood Guy). That was a situation where all my living expenses were paid for. It was absolute bliss. Actually the project is ongoing. It's a very comfortable marriage of business and art.

M Where does Guru Adrian fit into all this?

D He's taking a break for a while. MTV flirted with the

idea of animating him, but that's just talk. Actually everything in this town is talk. The trick is to talk about 12 things at once, and one of them is bound to happen.

M So what is next for David Art Wales?

D Big things.

M The main focus being what?

D Fine art. It's just hard to make a living out of fine art. This week I did a voice-over — \$200 in 6 minutes. But this is NY and the wrist specialist happened to cost \$200 in 30 seconds.

M So are you finding enough money to live on?

D No, but there's no time to dwell on what you don't have either. You're just going 100 miles an hour here to afford to live. It's not hellishly expensive, just everything is so consumer orientated. You're constantly spending, there are products pulsating everywhere you look. It's ten bucks just to leave your house.

M You're becoming a real New Yorker, you know.

D I don't altogether agree with you. I think the most New Yorkiest people know what's happening ALL THE TIME.

M All this has got to be influencing you . . .

D Everything influences you when you're living here. That's why I'm working in 10 different styles. As you go on you sort of conflate.

M What?

D CO-N-FLA-T-E. The opposite of deflate.

M You mean inflate.

D No, I mean conflate.

(This goes on for a while and we establish that there is such a word. It means to combine or fuse together.)

M So, your work has been changing a lot then?

A The work changes from day to day. This city is just so IN YOUR FACE that it's very hard to focus. You're overstimulated here. It's a city that drives you. The best way to describe NY to someone who's never been here is to sit in a vibra-chair listening to 50 years of music that's about NY on a walkman on fast forward while a bank of 20 TV's all play TV shows and films set in NY over the past 50 years on faster forward.

M Tell me something I don't know.

D Well, I just placed an ad in the NY Press. I want to be a professional companion. The ad says Well Mannered, Well Dressed, Erudite Australian Artist Wishes To Meet Generous Older Woman For Friendship, Dining, Outings and Conversation. I sort of want to be a eunuch gigolo.

M Totally impossible.

D Not exactly a eunuch or gigolo—just a non-sexual

walker. I want to escort rich old women.

M To where?

D Anywhere.

M For money?

D I just want them to buy me food and perhaps patronise my work. I'm genuine about it, I'm not out to rip anybody off. There are many eccentric ways to make a living in NY. I made cappuccinos for a week, but found I'd rather be painting. I mean, I made coffee for Mick Jagger, but so fucking what? I made \$160 over four days.

M Have you had any bad experiences here?

D I had a mugging incident. That really taught me to look around at EVERYTHING going on. It taught me how to deal with people and survive.

M How?

D I've had insights into this city that a lot of people wouldn't as I have a black girlfriend and a Puerto Rican assistant. They've taught me a lot and opened my eyes to the problems that are integral to this city. Just this morning my girlfriend and I were walking and we got abused by this black man. He was saying "Yo, sister, we're your brothers . . . what do you want with that white shit?" We got a lot of that type of thing. It's ugly and symptomatic of the city, but at the same time I understand their point.

M The racial tension here really changes a person doesn't it?

D Yeah. I notice how I avert my eyes a lot on the street. I see kids with baseball bats all the time, ordinarily you would think they were going to play baseball somewhere. Then, you remember that this is NY.

M Are you ever overwhelmed by the poverty here?

D Yeah, this place is a mess. I remember walking on Madison Avenue at about 1.00am with a friend. We saw two homeless families who had set up a "home environment" in the courtyard of this skyscraper apartment building. They were hanging up their clothes to dry on the artificial trees there, having washed them in the fountain. It was incredible. It looked like Blade Runner. If you looked up you saw skyscrapers and beautiful townhouses. If you looked down you saw this shantytown.

M Do you ever think about being homeless?

D No, I think about living in a penthouse on 5th Avenue.

M Good answer. What do you have to say to the people of Australia about living in NY?

D Well, one thing I have to say is THE GIRLS HERE. That's it, just THE GIRLS HERE.

(a smirk and an eye roll ensue, then he's off) ■