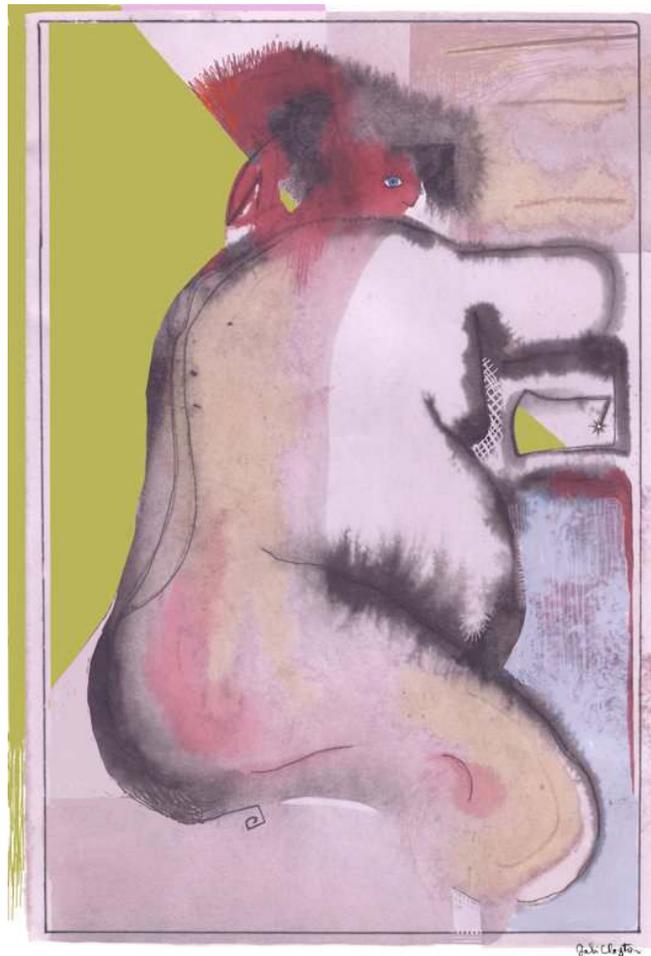


Gabi's Art is the Real Deal

by Alec Clayton January 9, 2023

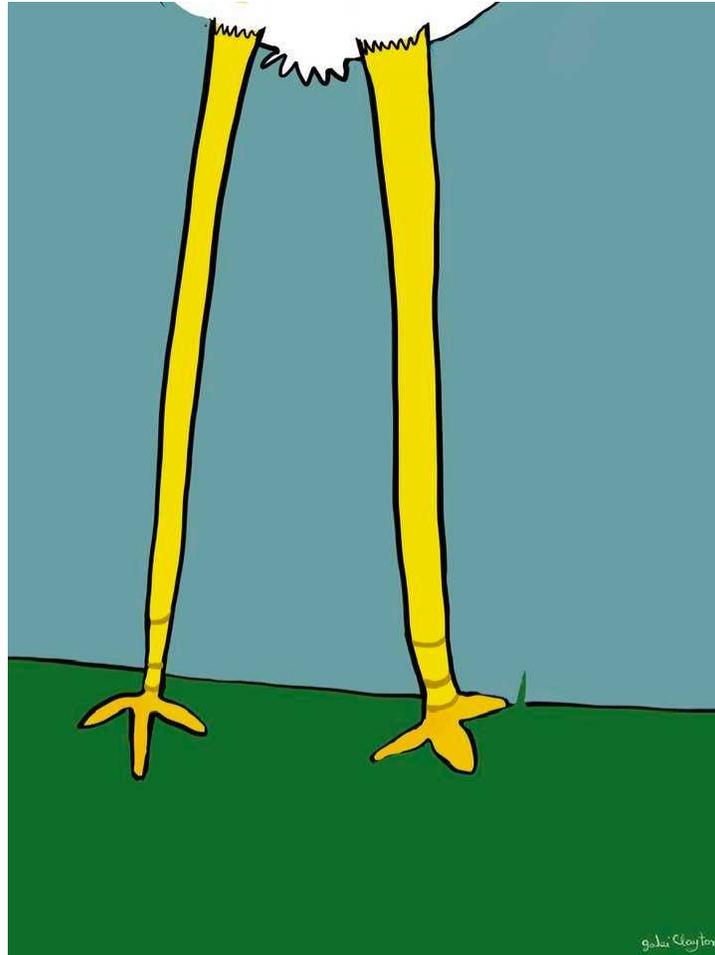
I'd like to say a word or two about my wife, Gabi Clayton's art. Her paintings and drawings—the difference being more a matter of attitude than of media; i.e., whether they're done with paint and brushes or pencil or pixels on an iPad—are as unique and as substantial as any you're likely to see in any art gallery.



Carrie Redux 2022 – by Gabi-Clayton, 09-06-2022

When she was in her 30s, after more than a decade doing graphic design and illustration on publications we created, Gabi went to college and majored in drawing and painting at the University of Southern Mississippi for two years before changing her major to film

and animation. She finished her degree at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. With little hope of making any real living as an artist, she then got a degree in mental health counseling.



Legs -by Gabi Clayton, 12-28-2019

Beginning in 1996 she taught herself web design and began doing that and graphic arts for herself and others while working as a therapist. She did not take up *art as art* or “serious art” again until 2016 when she purchased an iPad and began making art on it with the graphics program Procreate. She posted her work on her website <https://gabiclayton.com/> (including some of her older work from college), shared on her Facebook and Instagram accounts, and made prints, t-shirts, coffee mugs, etc. available with her art on <https://www.redbubble.com/people/gabiclayton/>.

Since she never exhibited in galleries and since there is a cartoonish look to much of her art, and since for decades she was known as a counselor, activist, and the wife of a painter/art critic, few people think of her as a “real artist.”

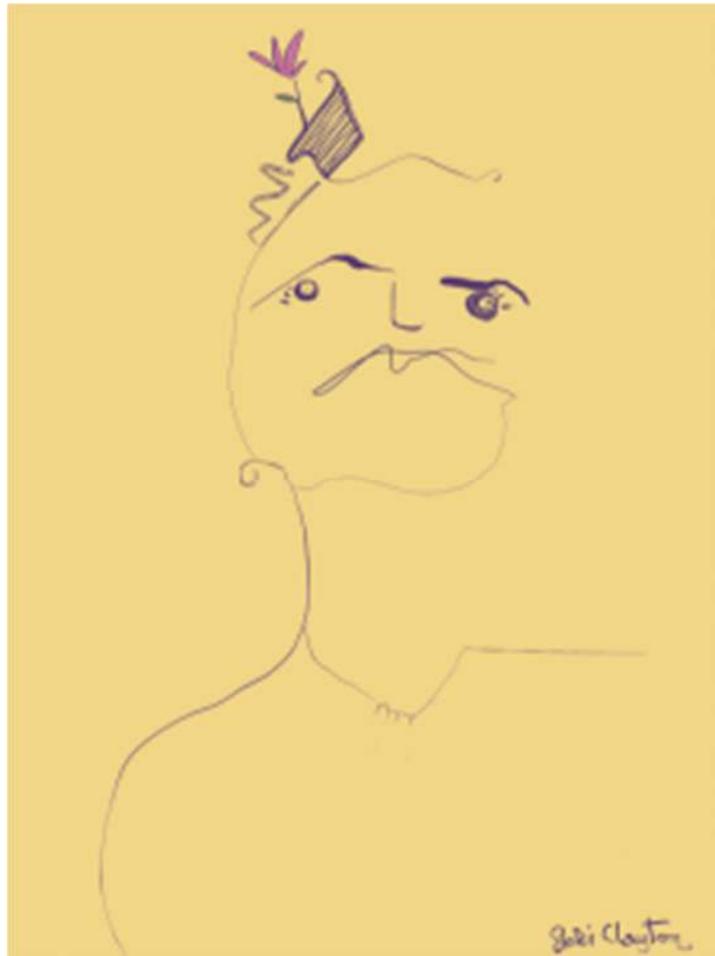


What If This Too ... Does Not Pass – by Gabi Clayton, 05-31-2020

But boy-oh-boy is she ever! Gabi’s art is the real deal.

Most of her work is figurative, picturing distorted and often comical images of animals and people, sometimes combined with words, and less frequently purely abstract paintings with pixels. There is ample historic precedence for such work. First to come to mind are The Hairy Who, and the Chicago Imagists: Jim Nutt, Ed Paschke, Gladys Nilsson; the great Phillip Guston, drawings by Saul Steinberg, and the

painted poems of Kenneth Patchen, whom she acknowledges as an early and continuing influence.



Determination – by Gabi Clayton, 07-17-2022

Her style was developed in drawing and design classes taught by Jim Meade and Harry Ward when studying in Mississippi, both of whom, coincidentally, attended the same graduate school I attended, and both of whom encouraged their students to do multiple variations on the same figures or themes, each with subtle or sometimes dramatic variations.

A design principle I have always considered important is the principle of variety within unity, which is one hallmark of Gabi's art that I believe grew out of, to a large extent, variations on a figure in Jim Meade's figure drawing classes.

Aesthetically, Gabi's work is pleasing to the eye. She uses complex balancing of forms with a sophisticated awareness of the picture plane and excellent interaction of figure and ground or positive and negative spaces. Thematically, her works can offer intelligent, sometimes startling, and sometimes outlandishly funny looks at society and politics.

Her work can be seen at <https://gabiclayton.com/i-make-art/> and <https://www.instagram.com/gabiclayton/>.