



## Neilah Meyers' Charcoal Beauties

Text **Lauren Cross**

Vivacious Los Angeles artist Neilah Meyers has never been intimidated by scale: the first piece of art she ever sold was *Ginger*, a 6 x 4 feet charcoal sketch of a sprawling Great Dane puppy. That was ten years ago; since then Meyers has continued to create big and now works on life-sized sketches, sometimes even adding extra paper around a work so she can continue her sweeping lines. Meyers, who studied the Philosophy of the Sublime at NYU, likes to draw girls, animals and skulls, experimenting

with different angles, texture and especially color, and throwing bursts of spray paint or acrylic into the mix. Born to an artist mother, she was introduced to the endless choices of art materials at an early age, but charcoal remains her preferred medium. "For some reason, working small has always felt too precious to me," she says. "Charcoal's nature is bold and strong. For me, to have a sense of tempo, it doesn't feel natural on a smaller scale."

Meyers is also a paper aficionado, and binds her own sketchbooks in preparation for her art; their existence alone becomes a part of a work in progress. She has her eye on the goal, but the creation process is just as rewarding: "Whether it's a human or an animal, I always start with one eye. It just makes it real: when you have a connection to whatever this piece is about, everything else falls into place." It's true that her subjects' faces anchor a subtle, intense life in the work, but it is their often blurred bodies which capture the movement. This intrigue of motion is perhaps another reason she loves charcoal, which Meyers confesses she gets all over herself. "Sometimes I come home and find I have a Cro-Magnon shadow on my forehead, because no one has said 'Hey! You have something there!'" she says, laughing. How sublime. *Neilah Meyers' upcoming group show, "Bare" is on view at the Whole 9 Gallery in LA through April 4. For more information, visit [www.neilahmeyers.com](http://www.neilahmeyers.com)*