

WRITTEN BY TAMI MNOIAN

GAY RIBISI, SYLVIA PLACHY, AND LAURA WILSON ARE THREE INNOVATIVE FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO ALSO HAPPEN TO BE CALLED "MOM" BY SOME OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST CREATIVE ACTORS.

GAY RIBISI

Gay Ribisi quarries deep into her memory trying to recall her aspirations as a child. "I didn't want to be an artist," she says, but then changes her mind. "Actually, wait a minute! I did. Oh my god, I'm just having a realization right now!" Her eyes get big and her voice climbs in intensity. This is a typical, high-energy Ribisi moment, always inspired, always inspiring. She is of a rare breed that is equally artistic and business-minded.

A prolific artist, this Berkeley graduate has dabbled in numerous mediums: sculpture, ceramics, oil painting, photography, and film. Her home is a testament to her work. Here, she is surrounded by countless personal artifacts. Hanging in her office are self-portraits and paintings of her family. Stored in her large studio space are photographs printed onto transparencies and embedded into blocks of resin. Her dining room displays a few non-functional pottery pieces (she's done ceramic replicas of Miami Beach and a drive-in movie theater) and her sitting room is dedicated to racks of costumes and brightly painted shoes. Her home is an artist's playground.

If Ribisi's name sounds familiar, it is because her children (Giovanni and Marissa) are actors, and this is where her business savvy comes into play. A dedicated mother who wanted to look after her son's interests, she began managing his career and soon found herself with a staff of seven and a client roster of 25 actors.

"Then all of a sudden," she says, "you get to my age, and I said to myself, 'Enough already. I'm helping other artists reach their goals and I'm not reaching my goals.'" So Ribisi closed up shop. Though she continues to manage the careers of Elisabeth Moss, Jason Lee, and her daughter's, these days she is consumed with making art. "I just kind of went, 'Now it's my time.' And that's when I started doing the resin thing, which turned into the underwater photography."

Ribisi is a woman forever evolving. She's lucky because she carries with her the unsullied confidence of a kid, which explains how she has successfully tackled everything she's set out to do.

"I was good at anything I did. That was something I always knew. I don't know where it came from, but it was there. I knew when I was playing kickball that I could kick the ball farther than any of these other kids, and I did."

Reflections (left) and *The Flower Keeper* (right) from the photographic series "Wet."

