



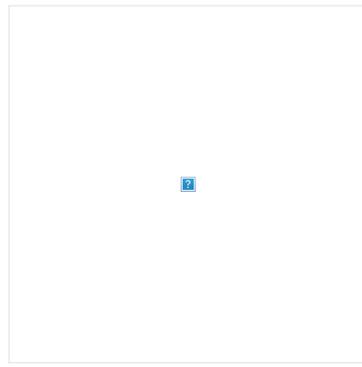
## REBECCA NESS

SEPTEMBER 26, 2017 | INTERVIEWS | ART OF CHOICE

Rebecca Ness received her BFA in Painting in 2015 from Boston University, where she also studied History of Art and Architecture as her minor. Ness is currently at Yale School of Art as an MFA Candidate in Painting/Printmaking, expected to graduate in 2019. She has completed many residences and has been in numerous group exhibitions and collaborative performances.

***If you could have dinner with anyone in the world, dead or alive, who would you choose and why?***

I recently visited the galleries at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and discovered the American surrealist painter Honoré Desmond Sharrer. I was struck by how she assembled her work, with a mix of a cartoony, hyper-realistic, and painterly languages all at once. She would also leave little easter eggs for you to find throughout her paintings, different moments of inspection and discovery that either set the painting off on a tangent or somehow make all the disparate imagery come together in complete logic. I'd love to sit down with her and just listen to how she assembles an image.



***Advice to your 15-year-old self?***

Oh man. Accept your confusion, and keep painting while you're confused.

***Why did you choose to be an artist?***

I was lucky enough to be raised by parents who taught me that being an artist was always an option and that doing what you love is the most important thing. I have this distinct memory of telling one of my first art teachers that I wanted to paint all day for the rest of my life. She replied: "Yes, you can do that!" So, I don't think it was

ever a choice for me. It started with a love for painting, and then important people in my life helped me discover that being an artist was indeed an option. I love this life, it forces an embracement of uncertainty and the unknown.

***Three attributes to describe yourself?***

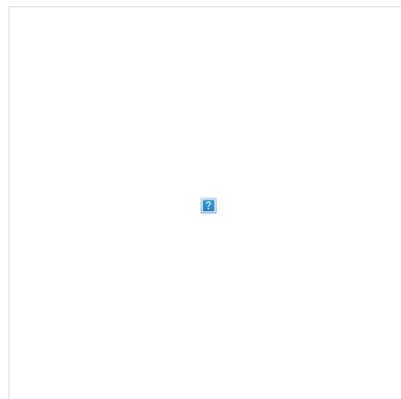
Curious, driven, kind.

***Are there certain artists, styles or movements you've drawn inspiration from?***

I draw a lot of inspiration from fellow female figurative artists. Nicole Eisenman, Dana Schutz, Alice Neele, Celeste Dupuy-Spencer, and Honoré Sharrer are all spirits that inhabit my studio. "Fun Home" and "Dykes to Watch Out For" by Alison Bechdel changed me because it was the first time that I saw a queer story that I identified with being told in a visual language that I also identified with. Peter Saul and Robert Crumb's work are also an influence. I'm intrigued by artists who take a certain cartoony, simplified language and make it incredibly complicated. I love the slow read and the gradual discovery of a genius composition, disguised at first as something simple. On the other hand, I also look at a lot of iSpy books.

***Can you talk about technique?***

I work extensively in a product called Holbein Acryla Gouache. It's an opaque gouache which is waterproof and dries extremely quickly. It allows me to work with urgency and make multiple paintings in a day. Gouache allows me to create minuscule details on a smaller scale and gives the viewer the need to "inspect" my paintings.



***What do you want your viewers to take away from your work?***

I think about the experience of being a person and what that smells, tastes, and feels like. We're all the protagonist in our own world, and I want to connect with other people based on that. I want viewers to think about the way they curate their personalities and their bodies depending on different situations: how one would perform their personhood with a new love interest versus how someone would perform their

personhood by themselves or with an old friend.

***If you weren't an artist what else would you do?***

I would definitely be a historian. There's something incredible about visiting a space which is full with the spirits and knowledge of what happened there before.

***What was the last exhibit you went to that really stuck with you and why?***

"Black and Brown People / White Problems" at Samson Projects in Boston. The curators made the exhibition an evolving and changing one. In response to the events of Charlottesville, which occurred during the duration of the exhibition, the curators decided to place a Confederate flag on the ground in the entrance to serve as a floor mat. It was satisfying to spend time in the space, looking at work by artists like Tala Madani, Steve Locke, etc, and then hear the bell ring of the door opening and a dramatic scuffling of someone's feet as they dug their shoes into the flag.

***How would you describe the word "ART", What does it mean to you?***

Art allows you to see something in a different way. Art is an exercise for both your spirit and your eyeballs. It can help you change your mind, discover a truth, or realize the infinite variables of perception.

***Do you have any quotes from previous artists which are important for you or words of wisdom that you hold onto or remember?***

Whenever I am struggling in the studio, I always think of what one of my earliest and most influential art teachers, Jack Highberger, said to me when I was in elementary school: "You can't make a good painting until you've made one hundred bad paintings." Failure is relative, and may not even exist. We can use the idea of failure as a marker of productivity, learning, and courage.



## LATEST POST

ONE BUT TWO (Haadzii), Otis Kwarne  
Kye Quaiocoe at Roberts Projects, LA

Jun 30, 2021

Feel Hypnotised with the Gaze and  
Clothes in Emmanuel Taku's Subjects

Jun 28, 2021

Discover The Power of Detail in the  
Objects of Pedro Pedro's Paintings

Jun 26, 2021

## CATEGORIES

- MUSEUM
- GALLERY
- INTERVIEWS
- FIGURES
- PRESS

## INSTAGRAM

Art of Choice brings you a carefully curated perspective of the contemporary art world. With our 'no-bullshit' philosophy, we offer an approachable behind-the-scenes look into the work of new, emerging, and established artists.