

Jennifer Agricola Mojica translates personal experiences, interruptions, and unexpected moments into visually captivating paintings

Capturing the complexity of life



Tell us about your recent paintings

The paintings I have been making recently are a visual diagram of how I think and process information. My experience of time and space is full of interruptions, chaotic shifts, and disorderly or awkward moments. As a mother raising two kids, I have learned to pivot, be flexible, and be alright with not always having the answers. My paintings reflect these moments. Nothing goes as planned. In my paintings, the surfaces are never planned but rather constructed with shapes, figures, or forms. I start with a section of an artwork from history that triggers a feeling, or I might see a mundane object, a dying plant or a photograph that sparks a memory or references time.

Left: Jennifer Agricola Mojica, *She Would Like To Scream But She Can't Get Her Breath*, oil on paper, 102 x 145 cm



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Recently, I worked on a series called *Feathers*. It was shortly after the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde, Texas, that I dropped my fourth-grade daughter off at school, holding back a lot of emotions. Later that day, on the college campus where I teach, I deconstructed my students’ vanitas still-life, pulling aside one of the props – a black crow. I used it for a small painting demo and then became fixated on it for several paintings. The crow

Top: Jennifer Agricola Mojica, *Feathers Nu. 9*, oil on paper, mounted on wood, 96 x 122 cm



became a powerful image for me.

In all my paintings, forms, figures, and objects are covered, buried, or obliterated. The crow gets lost under layers or fragmented by other planes. Figures are added and then taken away, landscapes are added in and then covered up. Dissolving spaces and stacking shapes, objects and planes helps me to move through, find, and explore ideas that could never happen if I worked linearly.

Take us through the process of creating your work

Paintings are not compositionally planned or sketched beforehand. Instead, I begin with a prompt such as an object in the studio, a photograph, or part of a master painting. After

Top: Jennifer Agricola Mojica, *Do You Want To Go Or Don't You?*, oil on paper, 71 x 89 cm

loosely painting the part directly onto the canvas, I construct a space for it to exist, placing it in a table plane, mirror frames, or within horizon lines. This helps to organise the composition and figure out where the object or part exists. A crucial aspect of my process is knowing that the original part is only a portal to move me through the painting and not get too precious. My original influences are usually then buried, layered, and fragmented, or sometimes they re-enter the painting. I usually put aside paintings a little prematurely so that I can come back when I am ready. Most often, one painting leads me to the next.



Right: Jennifer Agricola Mojica, *Where Do We Go?*, oil on canvas, 71 x 89 cm

really exhausted but try to get into the studio one or two evenings during the week. The weekends are usually my time in the studio where I can make more headway on paintings. My husband is so wonderful with the kids. He steps in to make dinner or be with them while I paint on weekends and in the evenings. It's a chaotic schedule with little downtime. I always look forward to the summer because it gives me a lot more time to spend in the studio and with the kids.

Do you work on several paintings at the same time?

I typically work on one painting at a time. However, there are often times when I pull out an old painting and paint right over it!

Are there any artists that inspire you?

There are so many, but one major influence is Markus Lüpertz, who paints with abandon using gestural marks and blurring edges. Richard Diebenkorn was just a genius with composition in both his representational and abstract work; his paintings look effortless, but picking them apart, I'm blown away by the complexity. I also admire Alice Neel; I love her flat uses of colour in the negative spaces combined with drawing and painting the figure. Maria Lassnig was a daring painter who didn't care what others thought.



She was a fantastic painter that made some bold and courageous choices. She painted what she felt – literally. And Giotto. I recently returned from a trip to Florence and, for the first time, was able to experience Giotto's work in person. The scale and organisation of the architectural spaces and the figures were incredibly complex.

What would be a dream project for you?

To build a bigger studio so that I could work larger and see all my work together. At the moment my studio is fairly small, and I have a stack of paintings that I can't put up and view side by side. ^A

Jennifer Agricola Mojica is a contemporary painter, educator, and mother based in San Antonio, Texas. Her paintings are influenced by the journey she has taken as both an artist and mother.
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Time management as a mother, professor, and artist, is challenging. During the school year, my husband and I wake up around 4.45am to go to the gym. Then the day gets crazy rushing kids through the morning routine and off to the college where I teach five days a week. In the evenings, we rush to pick the kids up after school, followed by their extracurricular activities, dinner, homework, etc. It is a full day. I am

Above: Jennifer Agricola Mojica, *Feathers Nu. 17*, oil on paper, 90 x 122 cm