

create!

MAGAZINE





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Jennifer Agricola Mojica

Jennifer Agricola Mojica is a contemporary painter, educator, and mother based in San Antonio, Texas. She has exhibited across the U.S. and internationally. Her paintings can be found in private collections and has been featured in multiple publications. Today she splits her time between her studio practice and teaching at St Philip's College.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

In my process, a painting begins with a disruptive start and ends with a harmonious stillness. Planes shift and shapes repeat, forms are portrayed at different vantage points, and figures become fragmented. The chaos then becomes a calm meditative process as I weave concepts and elements together.

As an inevitable part of my process, disorderly perceptions of time and space reflect my lived experiences. I revisit childhood memories and moments of disruption in my work, revealing an underlying personal narrative. Additionally, my role as a mother influences the content and composition of my paintings. As I navigate my life and the lives of two children, I find myself in a place of constant learning permeated with challenges. These uncomfortable but beautiful experiences punctuate my compositional space. Houses, birds, and figures are frequent motifs that straddle the line between realism and abstraction.



I build up and tear down images. This process provides a dialogue between the creator, the artwork, and the viewer. The interconnected distortions and repetition of shapes draw the viewer into the imagery, contributing to the overall reflective mood of my paintings and ultimately challenging the viewer to pause, think, and contemplate the work.

ARTIST INTERVIEW

What initially sparked your interest in art?

My childhood was filled with creative opportunities. My earliest childhood memory is of my mother's sewing corner filled with textiles, buttons, and patterns by her sewing machine. She sewed our clothes and quilts. She was a self-taught interior designer, shopping at antique stores, putting up wallpaper in the rooms, ripping up carpets, and adorning the walls with her art constructions. She would guide us through art projects like papier mâché puppets, and she sent us to art camps at the local art museum. The creativity, exploration, and discovery really ignited my curiosity and wonder. In high school, that sense of discovery and play was nurtured in art classes. I had a very encouraging art teacher, Shelly Brauer, who taught me—among other things—photography and the dark room. She gave me so much freedom to experiment, and as I watched the images appear on the film, I knew I wanted to go to art school.

What connects your work together and what keeps you creating?

I build a painting based upon revealing and concealing. The paintings I have been making recently are a visual representation of how I think. I begin in one area and progressively build out. Then, forms and spaces are covered and buried. As the surface is constructed, shapes are concealed and then revealed. The composition becomes an architectural dig. Pre-existing layers are sometimes visible when one sees the process; other areas are obliterated.

Unabated layering helps me to move through, find, and explore ideas that could never happen if I worked linearly. It is like going out for a drive in the country without a road map. I get lost but I discover so much more.

Describe your work using three words.

Palimpsest, fragmenting, and layering space and time—it is the way I process information.

What are you most proud of as an artist, whether it's a specific moment or who you are as an artist?

Since 2020, I have gained strong insight into my painting practice. I have learned so much about myself as an artist and mother; and how those roles influence my work.

The most recent body of work is a visual diagram of how I think and process information. Experiencing 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; other times, I see a mundane object, a dying plant, or a photograph that sparks a memory or references time.

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 the crow for several paintings. The crow 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.

If you could be in a two-person exhibition with any artist from history, who would it be and why?

There are so many artists that come to mind. But, today, I would love to have a show with Nathan Oliveira. I deeply admire him for his evocative gestural marks; his strong conviction of paint, observation, and reflection; and the slow read of his composition. I could pour over Oliveira's paintings for hours. They provide me with a space to meditate, breathe, pause, reflect, and discover.

