



women united

ART MAGAZINE

SPECIAL EDITION
2024

HIGHLIGHTING EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN CREATIVES, INSPIRING INDUSTRY LEADERS
& REMARKABLE ART ORGANISATIONS

SPECIAL EDITION

women united

2024 Y.

ART MAGAZINE

PUBLICATION BY WOMEN UNITED ART MOVEMENT



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Editor's Word

Mona Lerch *Special Edition 2024 Editor*

Welcome
to the Special Edition
of Women United ART MAGAZINE,
dedicated to showcasing the extraordinary talent
of the finalists of the Women United ART PRIZE 2023.
It is my distinct honor to introduce you to a diverse array
of artworks that embody creativity, innovation, and resilience.
In a world where the voices of women artists have often been
marginalized or overlooked, Women United ART PRIZE stands as a
beacon of empowerment and recognition. Each piece featured in this
edition represents a triumph of vision and expression, a testament to
the boundless creativity and ingenuity of women artists worldwide. From
bold and provocative paintings, intricate collages and textile works, to
captivating photographs, prints and digital art, the artists presented here
span a multitude of styles, mediums, and perspectives. Yet, they are
united by a common thread: the power to inspire, provoke thought,
and evoke emotion in all who encounter them. As you journey
through the pages of this edition, I invite you to immerse
yourself in the rich tapestry of women's artistry and to
celebrate the remarkable contributions of these
talented finalists. With love and unlimited
support, always yours

Mona Lerch

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Cover image
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JENNIFER AGRICOLA MOJICA

"Mistakes are hidden gems of wisdom. Allow mistakes to happen and consider the questions they present. Perfection leads me nowhere but rather will destroy progress in my work and my life."

2ND PLACE WINNER
PAINTING & DRAWING

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. Living in several cities during her formative years, adapting to new experiences at an early age, and transitions through motherhood are suggested through her compositions. Agricola Mojica's work conveys shifting perspectives and figures, layers that conceal and reveal, monotonous repetition punctured by shapes, and suggestions of a fragmented time and space.

Agricola Mojica has exhibited nationally and internationally. Her paintings can be found in private collections and have been featured in multiple publications.

After earning her BFA in painting from Ohio University College of Fine Arts, Agricola Mojica went on to receive her MFA in sculpture from The University of Texas at San Antonio. Today, she splits her time between her studio practice and teaching at St Philip's College.



"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 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. All of these uncomfortable but beautiful experiences punctuate my compositional space. Houses, birds, and figures are frequent motifs that straddle the line between realism and abstraction."

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Photo credit: Anthony Garcia

CAN YOU SHARE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND YOUR JOURNEY INTO THE ART WORLD?

I grew up in the Midwest, surrounded by art. My mother is a huge inspiration to me and was always so creative. Growing up, she had an eye for design. She loved sewing clothes, rug hooking, and decorating the house. Our lives were perfectly curated in our house, where her artwork hung on the walls. My mother did a lot of creative projects with us, from puppet-making to costumes. She also took us to the Toledo (Ohio) Museum of Art, where we attended art classes from a very young age. All these experiences planted the seeds of my interest and curiosity in art.

In high school, my art teacher, Shelly Brauer, encouraged students to explore media that piqued their interest. I chose photography and became very intrigued by the dark room. I learned to develop film and loved watching the image emerge on the paper. Today, this slow evolution of an image is embedded in the way I build a painting.

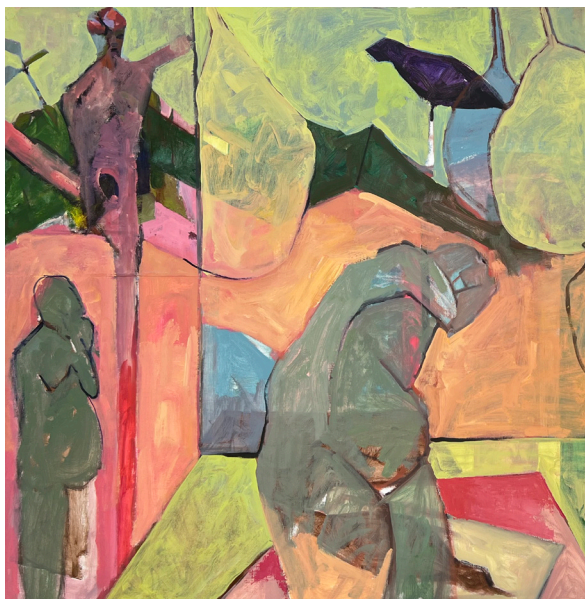
Attending Ohio University, I learned the foundations of painting. Over time, I learned to challenge traditional ideas of art and push boundaries. I started experimenting with painting and the subject matter. I questioned, What is a painting? An object? A skin? An extension of the body? My curiosity seemed to move me further away from the painting process and into a world of conceptualism. I was interested in Eva Hesse, Valie Export, and Ann Hamilton. I left behind painting and moved to building installations. Surface, layering, and time became

very important to my process. I carried these ideas with me through graduate school at The University of Texas at San Antonio, where I practiced sculpture. It wasn't until years later that I returned to painting with all this practice working in three-dimensional space. However, the exploration of surface, layers, and time is still intact and relevant in my work.

HOW HAS YOUR ART PRACTICE EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

After my MFA, my work in the studio went on the back burner. I had a few shows, but I was not certain what direction to take my art practice. I felt that maybe I was out of ideas.

I put most of my focus on getting a teaching job and within a few months of graduating from UTSA, I landed an adjunct teaching job at St. Philip's College in San Antonio. Eventually, this led to a full-time tenured track position. I married and became a mother of two kids, all the while focusing on my teaching career. I put in 110% of my energy and time into teaching and being a mother.



Feathers Nu. 12
Oil on paper, 36 x 36 in

At some point, my art tank felt empty. After seven years of hiatus from making work, I began turning to points of creativity. Taking workshops, figure painting classes, and connecting with artists, I began to find my way back to the studio. My biggest takeaway from participating in workshops and classes is that we all have setbacks. Students and faculty alike make mistakes in their painting processes. Errors, questions, and blunders are all part of the process. It is the secret to making an honest painting.

I had always wanted to be perfect with my work AND, as a result, didn't make work in the studio because I knew it wouldn't be "great". I discovered that every artist has their own solutions to a painting problem. No one comes up with the same solution. There is no formula. I realized that my answers to building a painting are about my search and investigation. My paintings were not meant to be pretty or tight. My paintings are about a journey. Instead of getting things right, I let myself get it wrong. This frees me from the perfectionist ideas holding me up in the studio.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AND YOUR ART?

My life has never been linear, nor am I on a direct path. My paintings reflect how I think: they are a diagram of experiences I feel, hear, and see. They provide me with a space to meditate, breathe, pause, reflect, discover, be childlike, wonder, and dialogue.

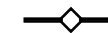
Rabbit
Oil on canvas, 50 x 36 in





Remebering (That Life)
Oil on linen, 48 x 36 in

PAINTING & DRAWING



WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO EXPERIENCE WHEN VIEWING YOUR ART?

Through the process of building up and tearing down images, I construct, cover, and unearth the painting compositions. This search provides a dialogue between myself as 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 in the end, challenging the viewer to pause, think, and contemplate the work.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE STAYING MOTIVATED AND INSPIRED THROUGHOUT YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

I like to keep paintings open so that every time I walk into the studio, there is a problem I need to resolve in the work. Lately, I have been trying to keep two or three paintings going at one time so that I can step into the studio and begin working on something. If a painting is close to finished, I will start on a new one to keep this cycle going. Inevitably, there are paintings from a few years or months ago that I will paint over if, in the moment, I feel like it was unresolved.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF YOUR ART PRACTICE?

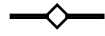
The most important aspect of my art practice is using materials that are around me. I am always looking for and taking inspiration from the present, but I also refer to the past. There are times when I see an artwork from history that triggers a feeling; other times, I see a mundane object, a dying plant, or a photograph that sparks a memory or a reference in time. Those images become the prompt to start a painting. My ordinary or mundane influences are portals that are then buried, layered, and fragmented. Like snapshot moments in my life, things get confused, forgotten, remembered, or distorted.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL THING YOU LEARNED AS AN ARTIST?

Mistakes are hidden gems of wisdom. Allow mistakes to happen and consider the questions they present. Perfection leads me nowhere but rather will destroy progress in my work and my life.



Innocence
Oil on linen, 38 x 50 in



WHAT DOES BEING THE 2ND PLACE WINNER IN WOMEN UNITED ART PRIZE 2023 MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR ART CAREER?

It is a huge honor to be recognized as one of the finalists in the category of painting and drawing. All the finalists are incredibly brilliant and creative; to be included among these women artists means the world to me.

As a finalist, receiving recognition is a significant achievement. It has shown that my work can make a meaningful impact on individuals and communities. My work can become a catalyst for community engagement and dialogue. With this recognition, it means that my art career has the potential for artistic growth and to be valued not only critically but economically.

WOMEN REMAIN AN UNDERREPRESENTED GROUP OF ARTISTS - WHAT STEPS DO YOU THINK THE ART WORLD AND ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO TAKE TO CHANGE THAT?

One step the art world needs to take is to follow other women-owned artists' organizations (such as WUAM) by amplifying women's voices and supporting emerging women artists with more opportunities in magazine features, curated catalogs, and podcast interviews.

Big and small art institutions can take steps to advocate, educate, and network with emerging women artists. They must take steps to share opportunities available for women and encourage more to apply to residencies, grants, exhibitions, and workshops.



Nobody Said Anything
Oil on linen, 50 x 48 in

Institutions can provide accessible resources to educate and engage in outreach programs to help women identify and apply to these programs. They can provide mentorship programs for women to pursue careers in the arts. These institutions must do more to collaborate, connect, support, and share resources with women artists.

Curators, galleries, and institutions should take steps to provide equal opportunities and recognition for women artists. They should seek out and feature more female representation in exhibitions and provide more recognition of women artists. Giving women an opportunity to show their work, celebrate their achievements, and voice their ideas will encourage and energize their voices.

WE ALWAYS NEED TO DREAM BIG. WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST DREAM AND HOW ARE YOU WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVING IT?

My biggest dream is to thrive as a professional painter. I would love to have opportunities for gallery representation that align with my artistic vision and values and to establish a consistent presence in the art market.

I am working towards this dream by maintaining resilience in the face of challenges and using setbacks as opportunities for artistic growth. As one door closes, another opens. I continue to put myself out there, embrace growth opportunities, and celebrate my achievements along the way. As I navigate the art world, I consistently stay true to my passion and believe that my successful art practice will undoubtedly contribute to my biggest dream as a professional painter.



Do You Want To Go Or Don't You
Oil on paper, 28 x 35 in

Where Do We Go
Oil on canvas, 28 x 35 in