



Janice Nowinski Bodies of Paint

Essay by Anne Harris

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Cover image, detail of Bathers at Rest, after Cezanne

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Janice Nowinski: Bodies of Paint

I'm an expressionist, essentially. I'm working from feeling....
The whole point for me is to tell my experience of being alive through paint.
—Janice Nowinski¹

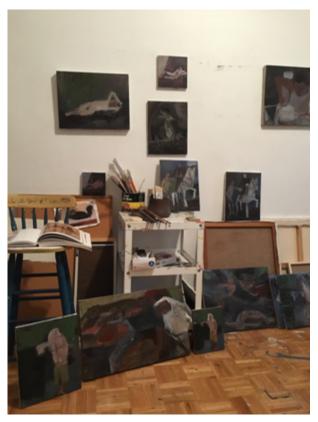
I met Janice Nowinski thirty-three years ago. She was a second-year graduate student at the Yale School of Art, where I was just starting. Her paintings then reminded me of birds' nests. She tangled marks together to build still lifes that were silver-gray and looked best in daylight. It was obvious she loved Cézanne, Giacometti, Picasso and Rembrandt. She introduced me to Soutine.



Chaim Soutine, Hanging Turkey, 1925, oil on canvas, 37 34" x 28 1/2"

Her background was pure New York. Growing up in Queens and Brooklyn, she studied at the Art Students League and the New York Studio School—no degrees, just painting. She was serious but laughed a lot, loved the

painters I loved, was completely unaffected and had a great Brooklyn accent. We spent a lot of time together then. At one point soon after she graduated, I visited her apartment in Park Slope. She painted in a tiny bedroom. This is notable because she's still there and still paints in that same room. This past June we sat in her small living room where her work was hung salon style, and we selected the work for this show. With the exception of art school, her entire painting life has been lived in these two rooms.



Janice Nowinski's studio, photo by John Mitchell

While Janice's longstanding live/work space is made viable by New York's rent stabilization, her focus is nurtured by her "art neighborhood."

This is populated by east coast American painters that came before her and still surround her. They converse with and react to European modernism and American abstract expressionism, and include historical

figures like George Bellows, Robert Henri and Edwin Dickenson as well as Marsden Hartley, Fairfield Porter and her teachers Gretna Campbell and William Bailey. Lennart Anderson lived within walking distance, as does her close friend and Yale classmate, Kyle Staver. Janice's art neighborhood peers are part of a contemporary resurgence of allegorical figuration that includes Kyle, as well as artists such as Katherine Bradford and Nicole Eisenman. Janice shares with them a non-ironic reverence for historical painting. That said, her work stands alone. Its intimacy, subtlety, slowness and deliberate lack of grandeur set it apart. Leon Kossoff comes to mind. She's a painter's painter.

There's a veracity that happens with singular focus in a single place. With Janice's paintings, there's a quality of light—cool daylight washing through dusty windows in an old building, striking irregular surfaces, leaving crevices and shadows dark. The patina of a rented space well lived-in—unpolished, intimate, private, modest, loved but not lovely—Janice's paintings hold all of this.



Janice Nowinski, *Man on a Terrace*, 2018, oil on canvas, 11" x 14"

Their constancy also reflects a continuous engagement with the same painting goals. These are near impossible—to make the intangible tangible while deliberately avoiding overt display: no catchy ideas, seductive skill sets or savvy subject-matter. Soutine's rough-hewn dissatisfaction is always present. Janice moves forward by digging down, excavating history—painting as archeology. With this,

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she connects to a truth that spans thousands of years, that we humans share touch, we feel, we are touched.

As a painter, Janice has evolved at a slow simmer. Her best work is being made now, after forty years of maturation. She spends months, sometimes years, working on very small paintings, pushing earthy oily marks against and over each other. There's no pretense, no intellectual or contextual justification. What we see: people, suspended between flesh and paint, squeezed into place, specific, anonymous and vulnerable. These paintings are blunt, tender, clumsy, graceful, remote, intimate and exposed. They have visceral tension. They have perfect pitch.

—Anne Harris



Endnotes

1 Xico Greewald, "A studio visit with Janice Nowinski," Painting Perceptions, Oct 9, 2013









Pink Bathing Suit VI, 2019, oil on board, 7" \times 5"

Self Portrait, 2009, oil on canvas, 12" x 9"





Birthday Cake, 2018, oil on linen, 16" x 20"

Nude / Red Background, 2013, oil on canvas, 20" x 16"





Dead Hare, after Chardin, 2015, oil on canvas, 14" x 11"

Pieta, 2014, oil on canvas, 12" x 9"





List of Works in the Exhibition

Bathers at Rest, after Cezanne, 2015, oil on canvas, $11" \times 14"$

Bather in Blue Bathing Suit, 2019, oil on panel, 7" x 5"

Birthday Cake, 2018, oil on linen, 16" x 20"

Dead Hare, after Chardin, 2015, oil on canvas, 14" x 11"

Draped Nude, 2017, oil on canvas, 16"x 12"

Girl with Seaweed, 2018, oil on board, 12 "x 9"

Man at a Table, 2016, oil on canvas, 11" x 14"

Man Looking at the Sky, 2018, oil on canvas, 14" x 11"

Nude on Red Couch, 2018, oil on board, 6" x6"

Nude / Red Background, 2013, oil on canvas, 20" x 16"

Pieta, 2014, oil on canvas, 12" x 9"

Pink Bathing Suit VI, 2019, oil on board, 7" x 5"

Reclining Nude, 2017, oil on canvas, 14" x 17.75"

Reclining Nude, Back View, 2018, oil on board, 8" x 10"

Standing Nude, 2015, oil on canvas, 14 x 11

Standing Nude II, 2019, oil on board, 7" x 5"

Self Portrait, 2009, oil on canvas, 12" x 9"

Woman Looking Back, 2017, oil on board, 14" x11"

Woman on a Pillow, 2017, oil on canvas, 14" x 11"

About the Artist

Janice Nowinski lives and paints in Brooklyn, NY. She studied painting at the Art Students League and the New York Studio School and then received her MFA in Painting from the Yale School of Art. Her work has been exhibited at venues ranging from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Academy Museum (NYC) to the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center (Washington D.C.), to John Davis Gallery (Hudson, NY), Zürcher Gallery (NYC), Steven Harvey Fine Arts Projects (NYC), and Kent Fine Arts (NYC). She is the recipient of a purchase prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her work has been featured and reviewed in such publications as the New Criterion, Hyperallergic and Huffington Post. She is represented by the John Davis Gallery in Hudson, New York.

About the Curator

Anne Harris lives in Riverside, IL and teaches at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She received her BFA from Washington University in St. Louis and her MFA in Painting from the Yale School of Art. Her work has been exhibited at venues ranging from Alexandre Gallery (NYC) to the National Portrait Gallery (Smithsonian Institute), the Portland Museum of Art, the California Center for Contemporary Art and the North Dakota Museum of Art. Her work is in such public collections as The Fogg Museum at Harvard, The Yale University Art Gallery and The New York Public Library. She is the recipient of such awards as the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the NEA Individual Artist Fellowship, and most recently, an Honorary Doctorate from the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, University of New Haven.

Harris serves on the board of the Riverside Arts Center and is Chair of their Exhibition Committee. This is the 17th exhibition she has curated for the RAC.

Janice Nowinski

Education

- 1987 Yale University, College of Art, M.F.A. Painting
- 1985 New York Studio School of Painting and Sculpture

Recent Solo and Two Person Exhibitions

- 2019 Riverside Arts Center, curated by Anne Harris, Chicago, IL
- 2019 John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY
- 2017 John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY
- 2017 Valentine Gallery, Elisa Jensen & Janice Nowinski, Queens, NY
- 2015 John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY
- 2013 John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 2019 Afflatus, 5-50 Gallery, L.I.C., NY
- 2019 Dance with Me, Zürcher Gallery, New York, NY
- 2018 Figures, American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington, DC
- 2016 Painting in New York, Leigh Morse Fine Art, New York, NY
- 2016 #PUSSYPOWER, David Schweitzer Contemporary, Brooklyn, NY
- 2014 Invitational Exhibition of Work by Newly Elected Members and Recipients of Honors and Awards, American Academy of Arts and Letters

Panels

- 2018 Panelist, "Figures", Gallery Talk, Katzen American University Museum, Moderator Jack Rasmussen, Washington, DC
- 2015 Speaker, "Artist's Talk", Janice Nowinski, Boulder Library, Boulder, CO
- 2015 Panelist, "Painters on Painting", Janice Nowinski, Deborah Kahn, Kyle Staver, Washington Studio School
- 2013 Panelist, "Reflections from the Artist's Studio", moderator, H. Leitzke, PCAD, Lancaster, PA
- 2012 Panelist, "An Astronomy of Things", moderator R. Bunkin, The Painting Center, New York, NY
- 2012 Panelist, "The Image in New Territory"?, moderator: W. Gitler, Art Students League, New York, NY
- 2012 Panelist, "Making Your Own Luck", moderator: E. Sessions, MICA, Baltimore, MD

Teaching

- 2019 Visiting Critic, New York Studio School, NY
- 2015 Workshop: Photos as Catalyst: Extracting and Transforming, Boulder Art Workshops, Boulder, CO
- 2015 Guest Critic, Professional Program, Art Student's League, New York, NY
- 2015 Workshop, Washington Studio School, Washington, DC
- 2012 Visiting Critic, Drawing Marathon, NewYork Studio School, NewYork

Publications

- 2018 John Mitchell, "Interview with Janice Nowinski", September, 2018
- 2018 Jaclyn Conley, The Coarse Grind, "Janice Nowinski", August, 2018
- 2017 John Goodrich, Hyperallergic, "Figures Formed from the Primal Energies of Paint", June 2017
- 2017 James Panero, New Criterion, "Gallery Chronicle", April 2017
- 2016 Patrick Neal, Hyperallergic, "Figurative Painting That's Emphatically Human"
- 2016 Karen Wilkin, The Hudson Review, "At The Galleries"
- 2014 Maria Doubrovskaia, Project Inkblot, "The Here and Now of the NYC Painter, Janice Nowinski"
- 2013 John Goodrich, Oneviewat, "John Lees: Painting/Janice Nowinski: Recent Paintings"
- 2013 Xico Greenwald, Painting Perceptions, "A Studio Visit with Janice Nowinski"
- 2013 Daniel Maidman, Huffington Post, "The Trustworthy Image: Janice Nowinski at John Davis Gallery"
- 2012 Jennifer Samet, Painting Center, Catalog for Exhibition, "Necessary Arrangments"
- 2012 Neil Plotkin, Painting Perceptions, "Interview with Janice Nowinski"
- 2012 John Seed, Huffington Post, "Janice Nowinski: Naughty Postcards and the Man by the River"
- 2000 Christopher Willard, American Artist, June, Vol. 64, "Copying Paintings at Museums"

Public Collections

Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama Portland Community College, Oregon

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Joe Sullivan and Camille Silverman

This exhibition is free and open to the public.

Gallery hours: Tuesday—Saturday from 1—5pm

For additional information visit www.riversideartscenter.com

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